

Short biography of The Holy
Prophet Mohammad
by
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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE BENEFICENT, THE MERCIFUL

CHAPTER 1

Nature of the country and classification of its people

Arabia, the 'Jezeeratul-Arab', is a vast peninsula about four times the size of France, situated to the west of India, from which it is separated by the Persian Gulf. To its west lie the Red Sea, and the Indian Ocean, separating it from Africa. It is bounded on the south by the Indian Ocean and on the north by a range of mountains. The nature of the country varies greatly in different parts. Whilst some parts of it are as fertile as the best lands in India, others are as sandy and arid as the great African desert of Sahara. Owing to this peculiarity the population is divided into two great classes. Wherever the soil is productive and water-supply abundant, the people live a settled life. In such parts many towns have been built and agriculture and horticulture are carried on extensively. But where the soil is not yielding and inarable, people rear shæp, goats, camels and horses. Such people have no fixed abode. They live in tents which they shift from place to place in search of pasture and water. These migratory Arabs are called the 'Bedouins', people of the desert. They are a rough lot, not hesitating to rob travellers and plunder caravans when pressed by want, easily excited to warfare and blood-shed, but withal very hospitable to strangers. The whole population of Arabia is divided into clans and tribes each having its own Sheikh or Headman, to whom implicit obedience is rendered by the tribe concerned. These clans

and tribes were often at war with one another, sometimes for very trivial causes, but, since the spread of Islam about fourteen centuries ago, things have greatly changed

Not having much intercourse with the outside world in the pre-Islamic days, the Arabs, especially the desert people had lived for long in their primitive ignorance, It is intercourse with various nations, that expands ideas and brings refinement to a people, and improves their knowledge. The Arabs had grown proud and self satisfied also. They were very proud of the purity of their language, for having no admixture of other tongues, for centuries it continued pure and undefiled. Their poetry was also excellent. They were so proud of these two things that they called all the other nations 'Ajamies', 'men with inferior and imperfect languages'. But while their language remained pure, the monotheistic creed of their forefathers Abraham and Ishmael (peace on them,) gradually grew vitiated. The worship of the heavenly bodies, the devils, and idols was introduced. The sacred mosque at Mecca, built by those two prophets, father and son, and dedicated to the worship of the One True God was surrounded with idols. It was originally called 'Bait-ullah', or the 'House of God', but some three hundred and sixty idols of different sorts were planted in and around it. While rendering homage to Allah as the Creator of the Universe they considered these idols as intercessors with him and propitiated them by gifts.

There being no religious or legal check, the Arabs indulged in unlimited polygamy. It was quite common for an Arab to have wives by the score. And what was still worse a son inherited his deceased father's widows as his wives and treated them as such excepting the mother who bore him. Partly from a mistaken sense of shame and partly from fear of want, he generally buried alive his female offspring, as did the Rajputs of old in India. Drunkenness, gambling, and borrowing money at usurious

Moral depravity of pre Islamic Arabs

interest for the said purposes were common and generally ruined many families. Even wives were pledged with creditors to obtain loans. In fact, the moral condition of the people was as bad as it could be. Further, a very dangerous custom was prevalent amongst them. If a person of any clan killed another of a different clan, the latter clan was bound to avenge his death at any cost. It was supposed that the soul of the slain person would be hovering round the spot where he was killed, restless and homeless, disconsolate and panting with thirst until its thirst was quenched by the blood of the slayer. It was therefore deemed essential to avenge him at any cost to the survivors. It was deemed a sacred duty to be discharged by the clan sooner or later, as otherwise the curses uttered by the soul of the slain would annihilate it. As is natural, the avengers generally committed excesses in taking revenge and this gave rise to further blood-feuds, so that this mutual slaughter continued for decades. Sometimes whole clans were extirpated in this way. This system was identical with the 'vendetta' of Southern Europe. Which of the clans had the right of first entry over a common pasture-land or a public way, whose camels should first drink at well, such were the causes which brought on bloody wars lasting for years. Though there were some good traits in their character, such as hospitality, a rigid fulfilment of their vows and promises, yet their vices were more numerous and the Arabs of Pre Islamic days were like silly spoilt children. There were some Jews and some Christians in the more important cities, but they were no better. Both those religions, especially Christianity, were corrupted to the core. Of the twelve months in the year, four were set apart as sacred, in which no warfare was allowed, and people were free to travel about the country unmolested, even through the territory of their foes. A large fair was held at Mecca annually where people from all parts of Arabia assembled, and not only carried on trade, but also performed the circuit round the sacred Kaaba, a relique of the days of Abraham and Ishmael (peace on them!). Life and property were

Four months
held sacred in the
year

then absolutely safe But as soon as the sacred months were over, wars and hostilities recommenced Such was Arabia some fourteen centuries ago But soon the customs of the country and the manners of the people had to undergo a radical change

Holding an almost central position on the world map and having no state religion established therein for ages, its people being independent and with no fixed ideas about the future life, and deplorably sunk in ignorance and vice, Arabia was chosen by the All knowing Providence as an ideal country for the inception of Isl am country for the inception of Isl am a religion to be propagated gradually throughout the whole world As a beacon is placed at a dark and dangerous spot to illumine its surroundings, so was the search light of Islam planted on the summit of Mount Hera at Mecca which has ever since been shedding its effulgent light to the uttermost confines of the world, dispelling the darkness of irreligion and superstition and drawing people without number towards their Creator Further lest mankind should mistake Islam as a purely human invention had it been preached by an erudite academician, the same All-knowing Providence chose as His Prophet and Torch-bearer a person who knew not how to read or write and who never had much intercourse with society but was rather of a retiring disposition spending the greater part of his time in solitude and meditation, thus proving to the world that he received no aid but that from Heaven

in remote antiquity, long before Judaism and Christianity came into the world, Abraham the famous patriarch, (peace on him) being directed by God, settled his second wife Hagar, a daughter of a King of Egypt, and her son Ishmael, (peace on him!) the first born of the patriarch at a place in Arabia where the city of Mecca now stands The father and son laboured together and by Divine direction erected a building called the Kaaba and dedicated it to the worship of Allah, the Creator of the Universe Allah having blessed Ishmael (peace on him) his progeny multiplied

like the stars in the heavens and the sands of the sea-shore who gradually overran the whole country and founded mighty Kingdoms Ishmael (peace on him!) had twelve sons

One of them Qedar by name was the progenitor of the Qoreish, in whose exclusive possession the sacred Kaaba remained for ages. On account of this exclusive proprietorship the Qoreish were considered the noblest tribe in Arabia. Their position was similar to that of the Brahmins in India who are supposed to be superior to all other Hindus. As the sacred Kaaba was visited annually by almost all the population of the country who made gifts and offerings to its custodians the Qoreish grew wealthy and commanded great influence and power over the people.

The tribe of
Qoreish / custodians
of the Holy Ka
aba

Nearly six centuries after Christ, one Abdul Muttalib was the custodian of the Kaaba and also the governor of Mecca. He had twelve sons. One of them Abdullah by name, died in the twenty fourth year of his life, leaving a young widow, Amina in the family way. In the spring of 570 A. D. on the 22nd April at early dawn a male child was born to the window lady. The grandfather Abdul Muttalib was overjoyed and at once carried the baby into the Kaaba and there prayed for him and blessed him and gave him the name 'Muhammad' (God's peace and blessings on him!) Meantime the mother, being told by an angel in a dream had called him Ahmed, as soon as he was born. So the Holy Prophet is known by both names. Both the words are derivatives from the same root H M D and 'Muhammad' means 'the praised one', the 'illustrious'. When the old gentleman was asked why he had not given a name more familiar to the Arabs, he replied that he

Birth of the
Holy Prophet

The Holy prophet bore two names their etymology

hoped the child would grow into an illustrious personage and would be praised by all the world. The name was indeed very rare amongst the Arabs, almost unknown. When the baby passed a week of his existence in his mother's lap he was handed over, according to the custom of the Arab nobility, to a wet-nurse Halima by name, of the tribe of Banu Saad, who carried him off to her own place amongst the hills and took care of him till he was four years old. Then he was restored to the family and enjoyed maternal protection and love only for a couple of years. Then his mother passed away leaving him a double orphan. The care of the child thus devolved upon his old grandfather. This kind shelter in its turn was taken away from him when he was only eight years. Before passing away, the old patriarch enjoined with his last breath upon his son and successor to take every care of the orphan and to bring him up properly. His uncle Abu Taleb thus had the child under his protection and nobly discharged his trust, loving him even better than his own children, and administering to his every want and comfort to the best of his power.

The child grew up into an exemplary young man. He never played with the children in the streets. He never joined them in any mischievous pranks. He never bowed before any idol, never drank wine, never gambled nor participated in any indecent promiscuous dances with boys and girls of his age then in vogue. In fact he was free from all the common vices then prevalent amongst his people. Above all he was never known to tell a lie nor to deceive any one nor ever to break his word. These virtues so shone forth in his very youth that by unanimous consent of the tribe the surname or title of 'Al Amin' was bestowed upon him. It may be interpreted as 'the trustworthy', 'the faithful and true'. He was of a contemplative turn of mind. His bearing was gentlemanly and noble. He

The childhood
and youth of the
Holy prophet

The title Al
Amin bestowed
upon him by the
tribe

was ever ready to help the aged, the needy, the widow and the orphan. He used to assist his uncle in his work and sometimes tended his camels on the neighbouring hills in solitude. He accompanied his uncle once or twice in his mercantile journeys to the neighbouring country. But this was rare and his absence from Mecca never exceeded a few weeks at a time. The fame of his strict probity and solid good nature became so well known in the country that a wealthy widow Khadijah by name who was in need of a trustworthy agent to look after her commercial concerns engaged him to take charge of her caravan and dispose of the commodities in a neighbouring country. He accepted the trust and in very short time returned having accomplished his object and bringing nearly double the profit she expected. A trusty old slave whom she had sent along with him to serve and help him, spoke in such glowing terms of the young agent's honesty, tact and fair dealing that the lady offered her hand in wedlock though she had previously declined several offers from very wealthy men. The offer was accepted and with

the consent of his guardian uncle Abn
 His marriage Taleb, he married her in the twenty-fifth year of his age the bride being some fifteen years his of his age, the bride being some fifteen years his senior. The good lady who loved him dearly, placed all her enormous wealth at his disposal and he was raised to affluence. But the Prophet never led a life of indolence and pleasure, nor utilised her wealth to gratify his own desires. He was ever ready to help the poor and the distressed widows and orphans were his special care. He fed the hungry, clothed the naked, comforted and helped the afflicted. The marriage proved a very happy one and the lady bore him two sons and four daughters. After fifteen years of wedded life the good lay thus summed up his character 'God will never bring affliction upon you, as you are always kind to your relations, you ever speak the truth, are ready to help the widows, the orphans and the helpless, are alive to the duties of hospitality and you

actively sympathise with the distressed " No one can so well estimate a man's character as his own bosom companion, the wife, who has every opportunity of knowing the innermost secrets and motives of her husband Doing good to others as far as it lay in his power, was the idea always uppermost in his noble mind Whilst surrounded by his wife and children, loving and beloved by all, and in comparative ease he never allowed himself any earthly joys He saw the high handedness of the powerful and the strong over the poor and the weak and deplored the general lawlessness prevailing in his country As an influential

Establishes a
Senate of Elders

person he established a senate composed of the chiefs of five most powerful clans in and around Mecca They all took oath to (1) remove lawlessness from the country, (2) guard and protect the travellers and strangers, (3) help the poor as far as possible and (4) to prevent the strong from oppressing the weak This senate worked in right earnest and the lives and properties of the people became more secure

Whilst busy with this philanthropic work and discharging his duties as the head of a pretty numerous family, he was always absorbed in deep and earnest meditation about God He frequently betook himself to a cave on mount Hira, at some distance from Mecca and there spent his time in solitude, in prayer and contemplation He thus remained alone in the cave for weeks and months at a time He used to carry his provisions, — simple things, — date fruit, barley bread and water with him while going to the cave, and when the stock was used up, he used to visit home to carry

His visits to
the cave on Mo-
unt Hira for soli-
tude and medita-
tion

some more Sometimes his affectionate wife used to carry provision for him He thus spent fifteen long years of the best period of his youth in spiritual apprenticeship, being always engaged in prayer and meditation in solitude Hindu readers

will understand that this was what they call 'tapasa' that is exclusive devotion to God and concentration of thought on Him. His experiences during this period were manifold. Sometimes he found himself surrounded by a halo of bright light, which though silent made him feel felicitous. He also began to see visions and dreams both when awake and asleep which proved true eventually. During such trances he lost consciousness of his surroundings, the spirit overshadowed the body and gained ascendancy over it and a panorama of spiritual things was revealed to his mental vision far clearer than eyesight. This state of things continued till he completed his fortieth year.

While he was in his thirty fifth year of age an incident occurred which would have plunged the Meccans in bloody warfare, but which his superior tact averted. Owing to heavy rains the walls of the Kaaba were seriously damaged and a black stone set in a corner of a wall fell down. This stone served as a mark, for the pilgrims, from which to start going round the shrine seven or more times and it was held in some esteem. All the clans worked together in repairing the walls, but when the black stone had to be set back in its position quarrels arose. Every clan wanted to reserve that honour to itself. Words grew high and swords were about to be drawn, when better sense prevailed and all agreed to abide by the decision of Muhammad (peace and blessings on him). He spread his cloth on the ground and placing the stone upon it asked all the representatives of the several clans to hold the borders of the cloth and raise it from the ground and then replaced the stone in the wall with his own hands. This arrangement satisfied all parties and a bloody war was averted. In those days the Arab clans made war upon one another on such frivolous grounds.

The quarrel
about the Black
Stone

CHAPTER II.

On the very first day of the forty first year an angel of God appeared to him in the cave as he sat there all alone deep in meditation and congratulated him on being made a prophet of God and bade him thenceforth go out to the people and preach to them to give up worshipping idols and to invite them to worship the only True God who created them. The angel gave out his name as Gabriel. The prophet was much perturbed on seeing this novel apparition a tremor seized him. He hied home and asked his wife to cover him up with cloth as he felt a shivering. He then related to her what had happened in the cave. She at once comforted him and praising him in the words quoted above told him that no evil could befall such a benevolent person as he was. She then took him along with her to her aged cousin Warakha bin Noufil. This old man was very learned and quite conversant with the Jewish and Christian Scriptures which he was translating into Arabic. On being informed of what had happened at the cave, he also comforted him saying that according to the prophecies in the Old and New Testaments a prophet like Moses was to appear and the angel who appeared in the cave was the same who had borne divine commands to the previous prophets and that there was no occasion to be afraid. He further expressed a wish that if he should live up to the time of Hazrath Muhammad (peace and blessings on him) escaping from Mecca on account of the enmity and persecution of the Meccans, he would render him all assistance in his power. The Holy Prophet asked him whether he should have to leave his native place. "Aye," replied the old man, "almost all prophets have met with opposition at the commencement of their mission and yours will be no exception Hazrath." Khadija then returned home with her husband and she was the very first person to acknowledge her husband as a prophet of Allah and to become a Muslim. The next convert was

Appointed a
prophet of Allah

The earliest
converts to Islam

Hazaath Ali, a son of Abu Taleb and the prophet's cousin. He was yet in his early teens. Hazrath Zaid bin Usama a freedman of the Holy Prophet was the third. The angel repeated his visits and revealed portions of the Holy Koran from time to time. The Prophet began to preach to the people privately, at first, and to make converts to Islam. But the work was very slow. However within a few days Hazrath Abu Bekr, the future first Caliph, who was a wealthy merchant and a powerful chief became a Muslim and through him several others. The angel during one of his visits taught the Prophet how to perform 'Namaz' the Muslim mode of adoration before Allah and its preliminary ablution or cleansing of the body or the 'Wadhu'. The reader will note that the earliest converts to Islam were those who were in close touch with the Prophet viz., members of his household and his intimate friends, people who were best qualified to judge of his bona fides. Had there been the least shadow of imposture or duplicity, they would never have believed in him or his mission, especially as such belief involved them in animosity with the whole population of Mecca and made them butts for the arrows of contumely and derision from their contemporaries. Here is proof un rebuttable, if proof be needed, of the Holy Prophet's sincerity.

Once the Prophet assembled [the people of his
 WARRIORS tribe
 for the first time] clan and standing on the top of a hillock asked them what they thought of him as he had dwelt amongst them for full forty years, whether they considered him to be a truthful man or a liar. They all replied they had never heard him tell one word of untruth and for that reason had given him the surname of 'Al Amin', or the 'truthful'. Then he asked them, "If I tell you that a horde of freebooters has encamped on the other side of the hill and is about to attack and plunder us, will you believe me?" "Why not" replied they "we have always heard from you only the truth and nothing but it, why then should

we disbelieve you now that you are standing on the summit seeing whatever is on the other side"? "Well then, listen to me," continued the Prophet, 'as standing on this height I can see both sides of the hill clearly, so God has revealed to me the present as well as the next world. I see that you are standing on the brink of a deep pit of destruction, death, inexorable death, is hovering over you and you will sooner or later tumble down into the abyss. God Almighty has made a prophet of me and has commended me to warn you all. You are debasing yourselves and wasting your time in bowing before idols of your own making. They can neither hear you, nor give you any succour. Turn therefore from this useless idol worship and render homage only to Him, whom homages is due, the Mighty Allah who has created you and me and all the Universe, and before, Whom everyone of us has to appear on the day of resurrection and render an account of all our doings in this life. I am talking only for your good and believe me, I am speaking the truth. I require no recompense from you for my services. I am only discharging my duty, my reward is with Him who has ordained me. Repent therefore in time and save yourselves from hell fire and words to similar effect. When the Koreish heard this exhortation they were struck with his earnestness. But every fact spoken to by the Prophet appeared to them to be novel and meaningless. They had never heard such words before. "What!" thought they "are all these idols whom our forefathers and we have been worshipping for ages, are all these powerless? How can man after dying and becoming dust and ashes be made alive a second time? It can hardly be believed that only one God created this vast universe and Him no one can see. Besides how can He send a man like ourselves to teach us? If He had meant to send us a teacher why did He not send an angel from on high?" Such were the thoughts that passed through their minds. Some thought the speech to be a soothsayer's harangue, some considered it a poetic effusion, whilst others

were of opinion that the Prophet was effected in the head. At last Abu Jehl, one of the Prophet's uncles exclaimed, "Was it to hear this rigmarole that thou didst summon us?" With these words they all left him. But the Prophet was not at all discouraged. He went on preaching the true faith wherever he had an opportunity. His constant preaching and reciting portions from the Holy Koran did produce some result. Slowly one after another, a few converts adopted Islam, whilst to the majority Hazrath Muhammad (peace and blessings on him¹) was an enigma and the Holy Koran a mystery.

The Holy Koran what it is and its effect upon its hearers

The Holy Koran is believed by the Muslims to be the direct Message from Allah to mankind. In its own words "It is a mercy, a guidance and a cure for all believers." It is full of golden precepts for the improvement and progress, temporal and spiritual of all humanity. The wisest philosophers may derive knowledge from it as also men of the lowest intellect. It rectifies the errors into which men of the previous religions have fallen. To sum up its excellence, it is enough to point out that by following its injunctions, a nation semi barbarous and poverty-stricken as the Arabs were before Islam in about half a century conquered mighty empires and became the torch bearers of science and civilization to the whole world. Its language also is superfine and magical in its effect. On several occasions men who were the bitterest enemies of Islam and went up to the Holy Prophet with drawn swords fully determined to kill him, relented on hearing him recite a few verses of the Holy Koran, and at once embraced Islam. Several Bedouins who prided themselves on the purity and excellence of their language prostrated themselves before the Holy Prophet saying that they adored the language of the Holy Koran, as they heard it recited before them and observing that it was not human but Divine language. A challenge was given out to all the Arabs to unite and

produce by their joint efforts only a few verses like those of the Holy Kuran, and the challenge remains unanswered to the present day

The extra-ordinary effect of the recital of the Holy Divine Book upon its hearers can be guessed by the following incident. When the inimical Koreish saw the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings on him!) gain convert after convert to his faith from amongst all classes merely by reciting portions of the Holy Text they were seriously alarmed and held a council at Mecca, composed of twenty-five Arab chieftains, who were considered the best Judges of the Arabic language, both its prose and poetry. They were all non-Muslims and hostile to Islam and the president of the council was Abu Lahab, an uncle of the Holy Prophet but the bitterest enemy he ever had. The object of the meeting was to devise means for preventing the people from listening to the recital of the Holy Koran and thus become converts to Islam falling under its magical influence. One member proposed they should proclaim the Holy Prophet a soothsayer. The reader must be informed that in those days a class of men flourished in Arabia as elsewhere who pretended to look into the future and foretell events, like the witches and seers of Europe, to expound dreams and omens and advise people in their perplexities. On hearing the proposal, Waleed bin Moghaira, an old and well experienced Chief replied, "I have seen many a soothsayer in my time. What comparison can be made between the misleading equivocal language of the soothsayer and the precise, edifying and ennobling language Muhammad (peace and blessings on him!) recites? Let us not talk such words to the people, lest they think we are given to lying." Another member proposed "We will proclaim him a madman." "What madness can be discovered either in his actions or his speech?" "Then, let us say he is a poet" cried out a third. Waleed replied, "We, all of us understand Arabic poetry in all its forms and variety and what he recites is

The Koreish
hold a council to
counteract the
effect of the Holy
Koran on its
hearers ~~hears~~

not poetry at all, nor does it resemble it in the least" Another suggestion made by a fourth member was to preclaim the Prophet a sorcerer Waleed again objected "Muhammad's pure life, his noble appearance, and cleanly habits would give us the lie There is nothing in common with the nasty sordid appearance of the sorcerers and their dirty habits with those of Muhammad " "Well then, uncle," all cried out together, "It rests with you as the most experienced person of this assembly to devise some means to counteract the charm of his discourses and recitations " Thus appealed to by all, Waleed pondered for some time and then said, "There is no denying that his recitations are sweet, full of truth, and also enchanting We can only tell people they are such as separate father from the son, turn brother against brother and part husband from his own wife We will therefore caution people against listening to him, and advise them to wad their ears with cotton" This was accordingly proclaimed, and many people went about with their ears actually padded

The Holy Prophet spared no pains in delivering his message to the people and to turn them from idol worship But the prospect was anything but encouraging Very few converts were made but of these some were very influential men When the Holy Prophet began to preach perseveringly against idol worship, his tribe the Qoreish became hostile to him Their hostility was due to several causes In the first place the discourse of the Holy Prophet appeared to them to be meaningless They had never believed in resurrection and to be told that they would all of them be made alive on the Day of judgement and rewarded or punished according to their deserts was to them a ludicrous idea, Not being accustomed to any check over their actions and having been free to act as they pleased without a sense of responsibility they did not relish the idea of being made answerable for their actions as Islam taught them Then, idol-worship was the means of their livelihood, the offerings made by the pilgrims being the chief source of their income and the Holy Prophet

The enmity of
the Qoreish its
causes

wanted to put a stop to that. A clan was composed of several tribes and many tribes were at that time on bad terms with the tribe of Benu Hashim, to which the Holy Prophet belonged and they did not like to make one of the Benu Hashim their leader. Further Islam equalizes all ranks. There is no distinction of pedigree or colour. The blackest negro is not inferior to the noblest and the whitest Arab. "He is only great in the sight of the Lord", said the Holy Prophet "who is the most pious and God-fearing". The Qoreish like the Pharisees of old considered themselves as vastly superior to the common rabble not to be spoken of in the same breath, and this novel sentiment of equality was treading upon their tender corns. For all these reasons the Qoreish became hostile to the Holy Prophet and to the religion preached by him. But as his uncle was the governor of the city, they dared not do him any serious personal injury. They began however to persecute the poor converts and in this they were very cruel, nay inhuman. Some they starved, some they laid bare backed on hot burning stones and live coals, some they beat with sticks and whipped till they were bathed in blood, whilst they killed several outright. A few specific cases may be mentioned here to show at what cost the early Muslims embraced Islam and what inhuman treatment was accorded to them by the mighty Qoreish.

(1) Hazrath Bilal was a negro slave owned by a Jew. When the Jew heard of his turning Muslim he began to torture him in various ways. He frequently starved him for days and the fast was ended with a severe thrashing such that he was bathed in blood. A rope was tied round his neck, and he was handed over to mischievous urchins and vagabonds of the street, who used to make him walk bare-footed over scorching rocks in the blazing sun, so that his feet blistered. The rope was so often fastened to his neck and he was so forcibly dragged with it that an indelible mark was made round his neck which he bore all his life. Sometimes they stretched him bare-bodied on the burning sands and heaped hot stones over his body.

The poor victim bore his sufferings with patience and the only cry that escaped his lips was 'Ahad', 'Ahad' or 'The One', 'The One', this being one of the names of Allah Hazrath Abu Bekr on one occasion happened to witness the torture and immediately bought him from his master and set him free. The Holy Prophet afterwards made him the "Muwezzin" of his mosque, whose duty it is to call the Muslims to prayers.

(2) Hazrath Amar bin Yasir became a Muslim together with his parents. Abu Jehl was torturing them all in various inhuman ways.

(3) Hazrath Abu Faheakh alias Ailah would frequently be thrown down on the burning pavement of rocky streets and dragged along it by means of a rope tied to his legs.

(4) Hazrath Khubbah bin Arath. The hair of his head was pulled off in tufts. He was often strangled almost to death, his neck was twisted and he was made to lie down on hot embers and live coals.

(5) Hazrath Othman bin Affan was often tied up in a mat and while in that helpless condition, his cruel uncle used to suffocate him with smoke.

(6) Hazrath Mus'ab bin Omeir belonged to a family rolling in wealth. He was accustomed to live on the daintiest of food, to wear the costliest raiment, and to ride the most valuable horses. When he became a Muslim his mother expelled him from home stripping him of the clothes he wore. He left all his wealth and begging a piece of coarse woollen fabric covered his nakedness therewith went over to the Holy Prophet and ever afterwards led an ascetic life in his company.

Hundreds of such instances can be given here but those described above will suffice to show whether Islam from its intrinsic charm and merit attracted people to

itself or whether it was spread by the use of the sword Decision will be left to the judicious reader

Nor was the Holy Prophet left quite unmolested Whenever he went out to preach street vagabonds and urchins were set upon him, and when he opened his mouth to speak they made such a din, whistling and bawling and crying out 'Madman!' 'Madman!' and clapping their hands that preaching became impossible He was pelted with stones and dirt was thrown upon him Once as he was praying, a ruffian threw his cloth round his neck and began twisting it so tight that the Holy Prophet was very nearly choked At another time while he was performing his Namaz, with his forehead on the ground, the dirty entrails of a camel recently slaughtered were put over his neck and shoulders His daughter happening to come that way removed the filth Undaunted by persecution, the Prophet persisted in his mission He frequented all public places, fairs and all localities where people assembled in large numbers and preached to all He pointed out to them how foolish it was to bow down before images of their own making, or to worship the elements, the celestial bodies, stones, animals, all creatures like themselves He exhorted them to worship their Creator Allah, the sole Lord of the Universe He impressed upon them the illimitable power of Allah, His Omniscience, His Omnipresence and His Infinite Mercy towards His creatures He admonished people against drunkenness, debauchery, gambling child-murder, extortion, theft, all kinds of deception, usury oppression, the use of fraudulent weights and measures, all of which vices were rampant at the time On the other hand he urged the people to lead clean honest lives, earning their livelihood by fair lawful means, being just towards all and helpful and kind to the widows, the orphans, the maimed and the sick and indigent "He is the best of men", he used to say, "who does the most good to others" Even to the dumb creatures the lower animals, he urged his followers to be kind Above all he cautioned people against debasing themselves by bowing

The Holy Prophet disturbed in his prayers and preaching

before anything except their true Lord and Creator But all this was gall and wormwood to the Qoreish, who were long accustomed to consider themselves superior to all mankind and ill brooked any restraint upon their actions Islam laid the axe at the root of this assumed superiority and made the lowest equal in the sight of Allah, to the highest "An Arab is no better than a non-Arab, nor a non Arab superior to an Arab he only is great before God really who is the most pious" such were the words of the Holly Prophet

When the Qoreish saw that nothing could prevent from preaching, they held a council amongst themselves and sent an old man, Utba by name to the Holy Prophet to negotiate "O nephew of mine", said the old man "We do not know what you are aiming at with this your movement If you mean to amass wealth thereby, we will all contribute to a fund for you, so that you will become the richest man in Arabia, if you want power, we will acknowledge you our Chieftain, if you want authority and regal state we will crown you our King, if you have any other desire we will satisfy it, and if your brain is affected, we will have you treated and cured We only wish in return that you desist from your preaching" Hearing him out, the Prophet replied that all his surmise regarding him were incorrect, that he wanted neither wealth, nor power, nor glory and saying that a few verses from the Qoran would best explain his position recited the following

"In the name of the Merciful and Compassionate Allah H M A revelation from the Merciful, the Compassionate, a book whose signs are detailed, an Arabic' Qur'an for a people who do know, a herald of glad tidings and a warning But most of them turn aside and do not hear and say, 'Our hearts are veiled from what thou dost call us to, and in our ears is dulness, and between us and thee there is a veil Act thou, verily, we are acting too' Say, 'I am but a mortal like yourselves, I am inspired that your

God is one God, then go straight to Him, and ask forgiveness of Him, and woe to the idolaters, who give not alms, and in the hereafter disbelieve! Verily, those who believed and do right, for them is a hire that is not grudged"

(Qoran 41 1—8)

Utba with his head thrown back and ears alert stood listening transfixed and when the recitation was over left without a word. Going back to the assembly who had sent him, he said "O my people! I have just heard words which are neither a soothsayer's harangue nor poetry, nor enchantment. Listen to me, my advise to you is that you let him alone and molest him no longer." When they heard this they exclaimed, "Lo! even Utba has fallen a victim to the enchantment of Muhammad" (peace and blessings on him!)

When this negotiation failed, the Qoreish in a body went up to Abu Taleb and complained of the conduct of his nephew in talking ill of their time-honoured deities and they added that till then they had patiently borne the insult out of regard for him, but that their patience was exhausted and they could no longer hear their deities preached against, and would prevent his nephew by force from preaching. Abu Taleb went to the Holy Prophet and asked him in private if it would not be possible for him at least for a time to desist from talking ill of their deities, seeing that the whole clan had combined against them. The prophet's reply was this "Dear uncle, if they arraign the sun to my right and the moon to my left, I cannot forbear delivering my Lord's message to these ignorant people, as the Lord has made a Prophet of me, and ordained me for this work. I want not your protection nor that of any other man. I will discharge my duty even if I lose my life in doing so." Hearing this decisive reply Abu Taleb only said "My dearly beloved nephew, do as thou pleasest and as long as I am alive they dare not harm thee." Thenceforth

the Qoreish went on persecuting the Muslims with greater rancour than ever. The poor recruits to the faith approuched the Holy Prophet and sought permission of him to migrate to another country to save their lives, which he willingly gave. A small party of twelve men and two women, left Mecca in the darkness

Some persecuted Muslims emigrate to Abyssinia

of night and embarking on board a ship landed in Abyssinia, which was then ruled by a Christian King, Nagasi. This party was followed by another and a larger one, composed of eighty three men and

eighteen women. The Qoreish hearing of this, immediately pursued them but before they could overtake them, the ship had weighed anchor with the emigrants on board. The Qoreish in a few days sent a deputation to the King of Abyssinia with rich presents and

The Qoreish send a deputation to the King asking rendition of the Muslims

begged him to hand the fugitives back to them, as they had run away from the country. The King sent for the refugees and asked them what the matter was. Hazrath Jaafar a cousin of the Holy Prophet, as

spokesman of the refugees made the following reply

“ O King ! we were steeped in the darkest ignorance, we were worshipping idols, we were filled

Hazrath Jaafar's speech before the King

with abomination, we were eating carrion, our speeches were indecorous and vain, there was not a vestige of humane feeling and true hospitality amongst us, we had

no regard for our neighbour, we had neither law nor any check on our actions. In these circumstances, God Almighty taking pity on us raised a great personage amongst us of whose noble descent, truthfulness, trustworthiness piety and purity we were fully aware. He has taught us to worship only the One True God and not to associate any other with Him. The Prophet prohibited us from bowing before stones. He has further commanded us to speak the truth always, to redeem our promises, to be kind and charitable towards all to refrain from sin and avoid all evil, to perform the Nazam or Divine Worship regularly,

to give alms in charity and to keep fast at stated periods, Our nation has taken offence at these changes They have persecuted us to the utmost of their power, so that we might turn from the One True God, back again to images of wood and stone We have borne their persecutions as long as we could and being unable to bear any longer have sought refuge and safety in your country " The King after this speech was over, asked Hazrath Jaafer to recite some verses from the Holy Koran He recited the whole chapter entitled 'Mary' Such was the effect of the recitation on him that tears began to flow from his eyes and he said "It seems to me that this is the prophet fore-told by Jesus Christ (peace on him!) as coming after him, I thank God that I have lived up to his time " He then ordered the deputation to go back This king subsequently became a Muslim

The Qoreish being unsuccessful in all their attempts to crush Islam and the Muslims, finally resolved to have one more personal interview with the Holy Prophet to warn him to desist and if he should not take heed, to slay him, and thus end the matter They therefore assembled in their hall of meeting and sent for him When he appeared they addressed him thus " O Muhammad' (peace and blessings on him!) we are not aware of any other person who has wrought as much evil to the nation as you have done Pray tell us what your aim is if you want to amass wealth we will make you the richest man amongst us, if you desire for power, we will make you our chief or even crown you our king, or if your brain is affected, allow us to have you treated by competent men" The Holy Prophet replied 'Your suspicions against me are all wrong I want neither wealth nor power, nor am I affected in the brain The One True God the Lord of the Universe who has created us all, has appointed me a prophet to turn you to Him I therefore warn you that if you listen to my words, give up idol worship and obey the

The Chiefs hold
a council and per-
sonally warn the
Prophet

injunctions of your Lord, it will be better for you in this world as also in the next, but if you heed not my warning evil shall certainly befall you" "Well then",

The miracles demanded by the Qoreish said they, "if you are a prophet, have you mountain removed from here, so that we may have more turning space, make a large river flow here, that we may have plenty of water, raise up a garden for us

with palaces in it containing stores of gold and silver and other good things" The Holy Prophet replied that he was a man like themselves, only his eyes had been opened and he was ordered to convey good tidings to the righteous and threats of punishment to the wicked and that the things they wanted to be done could be done only by the Lord if He so willed, but that he being an humble servant of His it did not become him to make such presumptuous demands of Him "My business", continued he "is simply to deliver His Message to you and leave the issue in His hands" "Then pray to your God to hurl down on us a piece of the firmament and destroy us at once for not believing in you, as you say that your God is All Powerfull" "Certainly He can do so but not at any one's bidding" When the conversation reached this point, one of the assembly Abdullah bin Ommayya by name cried out "Since you have not complied with any one wish of the Qoreish, I will never believe you, even if your God and His Angels come down from Heaven and testify to the truth of your mission" When the prophet rose up to depart on hearing this blasphemy, he was warned that the nation would exert their utmost power and prevent his preaching The Holy prophet then left the assembly without further talk But strange is the mutability of human resolves The same Abdulla who had been so cock sure of never accepting Islam, a few years later appeared before the Holy prophet and of his own free will embraced the religion he had so despised And this was done before the fall of Mecca

CHAPTER III

The reader will have noted the extravagant demands of the Qoreish on the Holy Prophet. No such miracles had ever been performed by any prophet of Allah before as those asked for by them. As much misconception exists regarding miracles, the matter is well worth a little discussion. "It is utterly impossible" cries out the materialist, "that anything could ever have been done against the fixed laws of nature by any person prophet or no prophet." But then we find various miracles as having been performed by prophets of God at different times, recorded not only in the Holy Quran but also in the scripture of the Jews and the Christians and almost in all the ancient sacred records of other nations as well. Belief in miracles has existed from time immemorial and has been entertained by the greater part of humanity of all ages. The question for decision therefore is whether those that wrought the miracles were all impostors and deceivers of their fellow men, and those who witnessed and recorded them and all those who believed in them were witless people or on the contrary, the miracles were genuine, and those who disbelieve are in error. The miracles are uniformly recorded as having been wrought by eminent and holy men, prophets of God and their followers, all pious and God-fearing men whose lives have been pure and exemplary. It would be absurd to connect them with subterfuge and deceit. It is true that some people are so fond of miracles that they treat every incident or occurrence as a miracle which can be explained in quite a natural manner, for men like the marvellous. It is also true that stories are added to as often as they are repeated. But making due allowance for these causes, it would be unreasonable to reject as impossible all those genuine miracles recorded in the Holy Quran, and other religious books because we do not come across the like of them in our own times.

Nor is it an argument against the occurrence of true miracles that many impostors have passed on their contem-

poraries their deceitful tricks of sleight of hand and legerde main as genuine miracles We find any number of sanctimonious rogues who while professing the utmost sanctity and piety are all the while feeding and fattening on the substance of the poor, the widows and the orphans But does this fact prove that there do not exist really honest and pious men in the world who would rather starve and die than touch what was not their own? On the contrary the existence of such base pretenders rather proves the existence of really pious men whom they try to immitate Without an original no copies can come into existence The veiled prophet of Khorassan raised a moon, no doubt an electrical phenomenon which was like the real moon and shed its light for several miles round and rose and set regularly and thereby pretended that he was himself the creator of the universe With the aid of this and similar tricks he gathered round himself a number of people who really believed in his divinity Now unless there was a real moon in nature he would never have thought of raising his pseudo moon The existence of copies thus proves the existence of the original The materialist so far as his knowledge goes is perfectly right in holding that the laws of nature can never be infringed but does he know ALL the laws of nature? While strictly correct in all his laws regarding matter, he overlooks the domain of spirit He forgets that matter is merely a slave in the hands of spirit It is the spirit that governs and rules the world Without the control of the spirit the world would be a sorry world indeed, a mere mass of inert dead matter In our own bodies we find ample evidence of the domination of spirit over matter Unless the mind or spirit orders, not a muscle of our bodies can move or act Where spirit operates the laws of matter can be, so to speak, suspended either wholly or in part An expert swimmer floats on the surface of water for hours together Why does not the law of gravitation drown him at once? It is because his spirit keeps his body above water thus overcoming the material law of gravity Nor can it be said that floating over water is due to any contraction or expansion or any other peculiar disposition of the museles of the body for

unless the swimmer controls his breath and exerts his will he can never swim. Swimmers do some times sink in water and are drowned but it is only when the control of their spirit over their bodies relaxes. We also find that blood in the human body issuing from the heart flows with equal velocity upwards as well as downwards independently of the laws of gravity. The phenomenon is plainer still in the case of trees where their roots carry up water to their topmost branches some hundred feet high, though they have no controlling organism as the heart. These and similar phenomena prove that matter is subservient to spirit and that the laws of matter do not apply to living matter as completely as they do to dead or inanimate matter, or in other words spirit can override the laws of matter either wholly or in part. In fact the relation of matter to the spirit is that of a horse to its rider. A trained horse walks, ambles, canters, gallops, leaps over fences and ditches and stands still at the merest sign from the rider. The rider can control his horse and not the horse the rider. We have further evidence of the superiority of spirit over matter in the case of cures effected by mesmerism. The mesmerist with a mere look or superficial touch expels disease from the body leaving physicians gaping at the phenomenon.

A certain name
of Allah an anti-
dote to scorpion
sting

The writer is aware of a certain name of Allah, one out of the ninety-nine taught by the Holy Prophet, which has the property of at once expelling from the body the pain and poison of a scorpion sting. You have only to repeat it a certain number of times and then blow over the affected limb with your breath and the pain immediately vanishes as if by magic. The writer has tried this in numerous cases and it has never once failed to effect a cure. No doctor of medicine nor other scientist can explain the *modus operandi* of this wonderful cure, how the mere pronouncing of a certain name can bring about such an instantaneous result. As the spirit is not bound by the laws of matter so also it is untrammelled by time and space. The human mind can recall in the twinkling of an eye scenes observed scores of years ago and at a distance of thousands of miles. The past, the

present, the future, the things adjacent, and things remote are all one to the spirit. No walls can confine it nor can any barrier prevent its free egress.

It must be borne in mind that all miracles are performed by the force of the spirit and have no physical or material basis. We know that Allah has showered His gifts upon His creatures in endless variety. Some men are born poets, some mathematicians, some astronomers, some soldiers and so on. The world has not produced a second Shakespeare, a second Newton, or a second Napoleon. Now the pre-eminence of those people was due to their spiritual status and not to their bodies. Prophets of Allah, whom He intends to make instructors of their fellow men are a class of men whose spiritual powers are far above the ordinary. As the scientist controls the forces of nature with the aid of his science, so these spiritually pre-eminent men can do with their spiritual force. But while scientist can triumph over dead matter, prophets conquer the hearts of men, which is a far nobler triumph. When Jesus (peace on him!) saw two brothers, his future disciples, casting nets to catch fish, he told them "Come and I will make you fishers of men" (St Mathews 4 18—19). It must also be remembered that miracles are not feats of legerdemain and that prophets are not jugglers who display their skill to earn a livelihood or to attain celebrity. No prophet ever worked a miracle either for amusement or at the bidding of his mocking opponents and hostile unbelievers. Nor do prophets

Miracles no depend upon their miracles as the main
certain proof of proof of their apostleship. The world-
Apostleship famous Al-Gazali says that if any one were
to tell him that three is greater than five
and in proof of his assertion were to convert his stick into
a living serpent, he could never admit three to be greater
than five, much as he might wonder at his trick of conver-
ting the stick into a serpent. Strictly speaking it is not
the Apostles that work the miracles, in reality it is the
Almighty Allah Himself that works them. Apostles who

Allah the real
worker of all
miracles and not
His Prophets

are in constant communion with Allah only pray to Him for the occurrence of a miracle and if He also wills it, the thing is done Their prayer is like the seed a husbandman sows in the soil if it be the will of Allah the seed sprouts and becomes a plant, otherwise it won't sprout at all as frequently happens, even though the soil be congenial and the seed sound Now to bind down Allah's power and hold that He cannot do anything but in conformity with the laws known to us is sheer presumption on our part It is bringing the All Powerful Providence to the level of us poor mortals How can He be called Almighty and All-Powerful if He were unable like us to go beyond our limits, the epithets then would be meaningless At the same time it is not essential that every miracle should be quite in opposition to all the known order of things, though Allah can perform such things also if He so wills On the other hand a miracle may be wrought by perfectly natural means and agencies

What is a miracle? Anything beyond the power of man and away from the common action of the known laws of nature Now it is a well known law of nature that no plant can come into existence without a seed of whatever kind it may be The existence of a plant pre-supposes the existence of its parent seed This is a law of nature well known to all and of which there never was an exception known to mankind at any time But in the beginning when neither plant nor seed existed how did the first plant come into existence without a parent seed? We are bound to admit that the All-Powerful Creator by His illimitable power brought into existence the first plant or the seed, whichever it might have been independently of the laws of nature as known to us What then, He did once could He not do again whenever He pleases? Now miracles are not ostentatious exhibitions of the supernatural power of the Apostles themselves for independently of Allah no prophet has any power whatever If a miracle occurs it is in response to the prayer of an Apostle to the All-Powerful Allah, to exhibit His illimitable power by

performing an act which is considered impossible by mankind and yet is quite possible for Him whose power is not shackled with any conditions or limitations

It is the constant practice of Christian writers to proclaim that Hazrath Muhammad (God's Peace and Blessings on him¹) on being asked by the unbelieving Qoreish to work a miracle so as to convince them of the truth of his claim to prophethood replied that miracles were with Allah alone and that he was only a public warner. From this they argue that he was unable to work any miracle and therefore his claim to his office was unfounded. Some of the modern 'educated' Muslims as if tacitly acquiescing in this argument and following the materialistic and athiestic writers are attempting to prove that not only Hazrath Muhammad (peace and blessings on him¹) but all the other previous prophets as well, were never able to perform any miracles, but that their disciples and those that believed in them have exaggerated or invented supernatural incidents. In order to advance their theory, they are obliged to twist the meaning of words in the Holy Writ and to give them a far fetched significance. They say that the words describing the miracles are all allegorical and should not be taken in their obvious and usual sense. But it seems that all this labour is in vain. Refusal to do a certain act does not imply inability to do it. The Holy Prophet never once said that he was unable to bring about a miracle, he only said with truth that miracles rested on the will of Allah. So also have previous prophets said the same. Compare the words of Jesus (peace on him¹) as recorded in verse 19, chapter 8, Gospel of St. John. Jesus disclaims the power to work miracles. 'Verily, verily I say unto you. The son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do ** *'. How clearly he enunciates the philosophy of miracles, by saying that God is the real author of the miracles, and the prophet only a tool in His hands. Then in verse 30 of

the same chapter he expressly re iterates "I can of my own self do nothing*****" It is also the practice of prophets to refuse to perform miracles because of the unbelief of those that ask for them or their mocking or tempting spirit Compare the following record of the Bible "And the Pharisees came forth, and began to question with him, asking of him a sign from heaven, tempting him And he sighed deeply in his spirit and saith why doth this generation seek after a sign? Verily I say unto you there shall no sign be given unto this generation" (St Mark 8: 11—12) Again, "And he did not many mighty works there becauae of their unbelief" (St Mathew 13 58) It is far beneath the transcendent dignity of a prophet of Allah to exhibit miracles like the feats of a street juggler at the bidding of every scoffer and unbeliever Miracles are performed by Allah when an exigency arises such that human power or ingenuity cannot meet They are intended rather to confirm the believers in their faith in Allah than to induce unbelievers to believe, though that may also occur as a subsidiary result Nor is it necessary as already pointed out that the miracle should be in direct violation of the known laws of nature When Abraha the Christian viceroy of Yemen on behalf of the King of Sanāa marched with a vast army having some elephants also with him to demolish the Holy Kaaba at Mecca, the poor Meccans not being able to cope with such a powerful enemy abandoned their homes and betook themselves to the adjacent hills Allah sent such a horrid plague against the invaders that all of them perished without having accomplished their object That was a miracle indeed

The invasion
of Abraha against
Mecca foiled by a
miracle

When the Holy Prophet left Mecca at night time accompanied by his faithful companion Hazrath Abu Bekr and both took shelter in a cave by day, a mob of the inimical Qoreish with drawn swords in their hands traced them by their footprints to the mouth of the

cave, determined to make an end of them if found Hazrath Abu Bekr grew nervous at their approach and expressed his fear that death was imminent and escape impossible saying, "we are only two and the enemies are many", the Holy Prophet bade him neither fear nor grieve for, said he, "We are three, Allah is with us" At that moment a spider spun its web across the mouth of the cave The pursuers looked at the web and in spite of the assurance of their guide that the fugitives must be within the cave, went back, saying that the web would have been swept away if anyone had entered the cave If they had only entered into it, they would have found whom they sought Now this spinning of the spider's web at the opportune moment and the turning back of the pursuers without going in was indeed a miracle wrought by Allah

The refusal of the Holy Prophet to work miracles asked for by the unbelieving Qoreish was not with reference to all miracles in general, for some three thousand true miracles are recorded in the books of Hadith or verified genuine traditions as having been performed by him to which his companions and followers bore testimony The Holy Qoran also bears testimony to the miracles wrought by him The famous miracle of cleaving the moon is mentioned therein as also other miracles Verse 2, chapter 54 reads "But if they see a sign they turn aside and say, 'Magic continuous'" Again, "There came not to them any sign of the signs of their Lord, but they turned away"—(Chapter 6 4) Then repeatedly the Holy Qoran upbraids the unbelievers for calling His Chosen Prophet a magician, a sorcerer whenever he performed a miracle If he had not shown any miracle whatever, how could the unbelievers have imputed to him, sorcery or magic The fact is that they witnessed numerous miracles as stated in the Holy Qoran being performed by him, as had been performed by other true Apostles of Allah but their hearts not being enlivened by faith and not believing in his apostleship and being unable to account for the wonders he did in any other way they were obliged to attribute them to magic But when at

last their eyes were opened and they began to believe in an All-Powerful Allah and the office of Apostleship they acknowledged them to be miracles wrought by Allah and bore unflinching testimony to them

Why then did the Holy Prophet decline to perform miracles when asked? On reading carefully the several passages in the Holy Qoran wherein he has stated that miracles rested with Allah alone and on looking at the context of those passages and the occasions when they were revealed it will be clear that the refusal always referred to such special miracles as the Qoreish wished for

Strange mis-
conception of the
Qoreish regard-
ing the miracles
of the Holy Pro-
phet

Having witnessed the numerous miracles performed by the Holy Prophet and not being able to explain them in any way they suspected that what appeared to them wonderful and supernatural was only apparently so, not in reality or in other words that their eyes were made to see by enchantment things which did not really happen, as a mesmerist by hypnotic suggestion or otherwise makes his subject imagine things which are not really existent, such as seeing a river flow while there is not a drop of water there. They therefore wanted two kinds of miracles to be done. The one was that by the miracle their persons should be affected, so that they might feel its effects by their whole bodies in a tangible way and not merely by sight, so as to leave no manner of doubt in their minds as to the reality of the occurrence. "Pray to your Allah to send down torment upon us and destroy us for not believing in you, by hurling down on us a piece of the firmament above our heads," said they, "or raise up a ladder reaching the heavens and let your Allah and His angels descend upon it and come down upon earth and go back up into the heavens by the same ladder and you also go up with them and come down again, so that we may be satisfied beyond doubt that you are an apostle of Allah" "And," continued they, "if you are not able or willing to do so, raise up all our forefathers who have died till now and make them testify to the truth of your mission

and raise up a garden containing mansions and palaces full of gold and silver and all things necessary for life and let an angel accompany you wherever you go proclaiming

The reasons why the Holy Prophet refused to work certain miracles demanded by the Qoreish

‘Lo! Here goes the Prophet of Allah and His messenger’, and then we may believe in you” It is obvious that the miracles demanded by the unbelievers were such that could under no circumstances be performed, for two reasons Firstly as regards the throwing down of the firmament, if such a thing had happened, the world would have

ceased to exist and no human being left alive to believe or disbelieve And Hazrath Muhammad (God’s peace and blessings on him,) is essentially and Apostle of Mercy,—one of his titles is ‘Nabi ur-Rahma’, or ‘The Messenger of Mercy’ The religion taught by him is ‘Islam’ from a root meaning ‘peace’ ‘safety’ He was sent into the world to bring peace and safety to all, as the Holy Qoran expressly says “And We have not sent thee but as a mercy to the worlds” Vide verse 108 chapter 21 On several occasions when he suffered pain and personal injury at the hands of his opponents his disciples suggested that he might curse them, he replied, “I am not sent to curse mankind but to bless and do good to them” When in the battle of Ohad his person suffered great injuries, two of his teeth were broken with a stone flung at him by his enemies and a ring of his armour pierced into his cheek bathing him in blood his noble prayer was, “O Lord! forgive my nation these their trespasses for they know me not and guide them into the right path” How could then a Prophet of Mercy pray for the destruction of his nation, for whose edification and uplifting he was expressly sent into the world, simply because they were foolish enough to make such a demand? That would be the undoing of his own mission As regards the other demand about the ladder and the angels appearing to all, such things are destined by the All-knowing Allah to occur on the resurrection day They cannot occur before their appointed time Besides if mankind saw the Lord and His angels with their eyes, there would be no more Faith on Earth Faith

is belief in unseen things and is the chief criterion of judging mankind. If you actually see a thing you cannot be called a believer. You may be an observer and a witness, not a man of faith. So the Holy Prophet on hearing such demands simply and truly replied that it rested with Allah to bring about the things they wanted, they would come to pass in due time. Now taking this reply as proof of the Holy Prophet's inability to work any miracle, is a serious misapprehension. It is ignoring the recorded testimony of the Holy Prophet's contemporaries and eye-witnesses which testimony has been recorded after such thorough research and scrutiny in books of Hadith, as is to be found only in the annals of Islam and nowhere else.

Those that deny miracles practically curtail the Omnipotence of Allah and are seriously remiss in their faith and conception of Him. It is also a fact to be noted that miracles are not given to prophets haphazard but there is an appropriateness in them which appeals to reason. To a careful reader of the Holy Qoran it will be clear that Allah bestowed on his Apostles only such miracles as the necessities of the time and communities they lived in, required. During the time of the Pharaohs of Egypt sorcery and magic were widely spread in the country. Allah therefore gave Moses (peace on him') a rod which on being thrown down became a living serpent. When Moses (peace on him') showed his miracle to Pharaoh he collected the wise men and sorcerers and they also threw down their rods and they also became moving serpents,—but,—here is the superiority of a Heaven-wrought miracle—Moses' rod swallowed up all those serpents, vide chapter 7 of Exodus, verses 10-12. The Holy Qoran affirms that the sorcerers on beholding this at once fell down and worshipped the God of Moses, (peace on him!) and believed in Him. The reason is obvious. They were adepts in magic and sorcery and they understood at once that what was accomplished by Moses (peace on him!) could not be done by magic or

An appropriate
ness to be found
in miracles

soicery and he who did it must indeed be aided by Allah. Similarly during the time of Jesus (peace on him!) the art of curing diseases by medicine and enchantment was much in vogue. Allah therefore gave him the power to cure diseases by mere touch, or by mere word of mouth which was far beyond the scope of all the arts known to his contemporaries, thus proving that he was aided by Allah. Finally during the ministry of the Holy Prophet Hazrath Muhammad (peace and blessings on him!) the Arabs were so proud of their linguistic achievements that they used to hang up their poems on the door of the Kaaba as a sort of challenge to people at large to produce similar compositions. The All Knowing Allah therefore amongst other miracles, sent a Book to one, who knew neither reading, nor writing with a challenge to all men to combine and produce only a few verses similar to those of His Book, a challenge which remains unanswered till now. Had it been possible for Qoreish to do so, they would certainly have out of spite and opposition produced several such books. This fact completely proves that the Holy Qoran is not a man made book but one sent by Allah Himself. This living miracle will continue to the end of the world. That this grand book should continue as pure as it was sent fourteen centuries ago and untampered with is another miracle. Apart from its excellence in other respects, the honour of continuing unaltered so long is unique which no other book can claim. The book was sent by Allah to prove to the proud Arabs that such a work could not have been composed by any human being. After a protracted opposit on of more than two decades and after repeated attempts to destroy Islam and annihilate the Muslims, the Arabs were obliged to admit the truth of Islam and the Divine origin of the Book and the whole nation turned Muslims, in other words the Holy Prophet and the Holy Book completely and thoroughly accomplished what they were sent for to do. How long could the Arabs remain blind to the supernatural excellence of the Holy Book in their own

mother-tongue when even hostile European critics admit it to be a 'miracle indeed' ?

This has been rather a long digression but the matter is important from a Muslim's point of view. It is regrettable that some modern 'educated' Muslims are wavering in their belief in miracles and the tendency is towards eliminating everything which they consider supernatural from Islamic belief and traditions. They forget that Allah has created two separate domains, the material and the spiritual, each having its own peculiar laws and that spiritual phenomena cannot be judged according to material laws.

After all, it is inconceivable why such undue importance be given to miracles as exclusive proof of Apostleship. Many personages are admitted to have been prophets in their time, though not a single miracle is recorded as having been worked by them. Of John the Baptist (peace on him!) it is expressly stated that he worked no miracles,—(St John 10 41)—and yet Jesus (peace on him!) admitted him to be an Apostle of God and praised him in the strongest language and took baptism at his hands and it was not till he was baptized by him that the spirit descended on him (St Mark 1 9-10). An Apostle of Allah is to be judged from the transformation he effects amongst his people and the good he does to the world and not by the number of miracles he works. If miracles without number be worked and yet no reformation of the people resulted, what would be the use of working such miracles? As for the Prince of Prophets Hazrath Muhammad (peace and blessings on him!) he not only wrought some thousands of them, all attested by his contemporaries whose veracity cannot for a moment be doubted but also left a miracle behind him which is always working, and will continue to work till the end of the world, being the strangest miracle the world has ever seen.

The Holy
Qoran the stran-
gest miracle
wrought in the
world

The miracles worked by all other prophets have passed away and nothing but stories of them remain, but the Holy Qoran left by the Greatest of the Prophets (peace and blessings on him!) will continue to do good

to mankind till the very end of time Its tenets are being followed by all the nations of the earth one by one whether they admit it openly or not As for the good done to the world, by him, can history produce an instance in which a single person, prophet or no prophet, who can compare with him in the amelioration and uplifting of humanity he effected? What miracle can be greater than converting a whole nation composed of several heterogeneous tribes, half savage in their nature, ignorant, squalid, poverty stricken, given up to all sorts of vice, free-booters, and at constant feuds with one another, into one compact body of highly civilized and virtuous heroes, each a saint in himself who within half a century conquered an empire which had not its equal at any time and governed it with such justice, toleration, and magnanimity towards their subjects that history cannot show another example like it? Apart from the conquest of kingdoms and empires they made they were the formost teachers of their fellow men Whilst the world was steeped in ignorance and superstition worshipping created things as their gods, and making gods of men and animals, they taught that worship is due only to the One True God, who created the whole universe They were also the torch-bearers of Science, Arts, and Civilization to all the world History does not show that any other Apostle did so much for humanity, nor left disciples who so scrupulously and efficiently carried out the behests of their master How then can it be denied that Hazrath Muhammad (peace and blessings on him!) was the greatest Apostle of Allah that was ever sent into the world?

CHAPTER IV

When the Qoreish failed to persuade the Holy Prophet to desist from preaching against their idols, they grew more confirmed in their hostility One day as he was sitting on a hillock near Mecca, Abu Jehl, one of his uncles and the bitterest enemy he had, went up to him and without any provocation abused him to his heart's content The Holy Prophet took no notice of this and

The conversion
of Hazrath
Hamza

replied not a word. This provoked Abu Jehl all the more and he hit him with a stone. On seeing blood gush out from his sacred person, Abu Jehl quietly left the place. Hazrath Hamza, another uncle of the Holy Prophet hearing of this wanton assault on his nephew went up to Abu Jehl and with a bow he had in his hand inflicted on him such a blow that blood gushed out of his body. Hazrath Hamza then went up to the Holy Prophet and told him that he had properly avenged him. In doing this he was actuated only by a feeling of kinship and just retaliation. But when the Holy Prophet heard what Hazrath Hamza said, he replied, 'Dear uncle, such things do not please me at all. Retaliation gives me no pleasure whatever but I shall be pleased beyond measure if you become a convert to the faith of Islam.' Hearing this, Hazrat Hamza at once embraced Islam. As he was a great warrior and a mighty chief, his conversion was a great gain to Islam.

About this time the Holy Prophet invited one Su
Phre other ward bin Samat, who was the chief of his
notable convers clan and was considered to possess such
ion understanding and acumen that he was
 surnamed the 'perfect' by his clan. On the Holy Prophet's asking him to enter the fold of Islam he said he had with him the wisdom of Lokhman and recited some rare and beautiful poetry. The Holy Prophet heard him to the end and said the poetry was good but asked him to listen to what he had with him and recited a few verses from the Holy Qoran. On hearing the recital Suwaid at once embraced Islam. Similarly another famous person, Zamad e Azwi who was celebrated for exorcising devils came to the Holy Prophet. He said that he had heard the genii had seized him and had turned his brain, and that if he, the Holy Prophet, would sit still before him and listen attentively to the enchantment he was going to recite, he would be cured. The Holy Prophet replied that he was welcome to recite what he pleased but before doing so he should listen to what he himself would recite. He then recited some verses from the Holy Qoran. After hearing a few

verses he cried out "Stretch out thy hand, O Prophet of Allah! that I may take my oath of allegiance to thee. I have heard many sooth sayers poets, and orators in my time but I have never heard the like of the words you have recited they seem to me to be a boundless ocean (in their import)" He forthwith embraced Islam

Tufail bin Amr was the chief of the clan Dous, in Yemen, exercising kingly sway. He was a wise and cultured person and was an eminent poet. He visited Mecca to perform the Haj. Hearing of his approach, all the chief citizens of Mecca went out to meet him and escorted him into the city with great respect and honour. But they so cautioned him against listening to the enchantments of the Holy Prophet that he went about wadding his ears. One day as the Holy Prophet was saying his Namaz and reciting the Holy Qoran, some passages somehow struck his ears. He then said to himself "I am a grown up person, well-versed in letters and am also a poet. Let me hear what the Prophet has to say, if it be disagreeable I can but reject it." He followed him and asked him to repeat what he had been reciting. This was done and Tufail at once became a convert to Islam. Such instances of the magical effect of the Holy Qoran in turning men's mind and converting the bitterest enemies of Islam and its most active counter-propagandists into its staunch believers and zealous propagators may be multiplied but those given here will suffice.

During the same year, on the night of the 27th Rajab, the Holy Prophet, as he was lying on his bed, the angel Gabriel appeared and requested him to follow him. He led him to the mosque of Jerusalem where he found the spirits of most of the previous prophets of Allah and presided at a prayer jointly conducted by them all. After that he was translated up to the seventh heaven, where he had the unique honour of beholding the Gracious Majesty of Allah and of having words with Him direct. The details of Hell and Paradise and all the wonders of the

The ascension
of the Holy Pro-
phet

heavens above were disclosed. On that occasion prayer five times a day was made obligatory on all Muslims before that they were praying only in the morning and the evening, twice a day. Muslim doctors differ in their opinions whether this translation into the heavens was in body or in spirit. But it is immaterial in whatsoever way the translation was made. It is stated that the journey was made on a conveyance named 'Burrakh', this word is derived from the root 'Barkh' which means lightning or electricity. There is nothing incredible in the fact that the Almighty Allah should summon right into His August Presence His Chosen Apostle and hold converse with him, without an intermediary. The prophets Moses and Abraham (peace on them!) also had enjoyed that honour before, but it was upon Earth, and this was in Heaven. As to the question how a body composed of flesh and blood could go up to the heavens in spite of the law of gravitation, we must remember that the power of the human spirit is very great. Under the control of the soul ordinary men make their bodies so light as to float on water for hours, would it be so very absurd to imagine that a thoroughly developed master-spirit of humanity by exercising superior control over its environing body make it so light as to be carried up in the ocean of air, especially when impelled by electricity. The impetus given to it would carry the body beyond the range of the Earth's attraction as a cannon ball overcomes gravity to a certain extent and an angel being in attendance would regulate the ascent of the body to the desired locality, so that no harm befell it during transit. As to how a human body could be alive without breathing the air of this world, the explanation is simple. The whole of the incident is said to have been over within a few minutes, so much so that the bed from which the Holy Prophet had risen is said to have been yet warm on his return, and we know that in certain conditions the human body continues to live for hours without any obvious breathing or even tangible pulsation, such as in catalepsy and similar conditions. The power of the soul over the body is very great indeed. When the soul expands and exercises its perfect mastery over the body, the latter

merges into, and assimilates itself with, the soul. It loses its grossness and materiality, and becomes as it were a part of the soul, partaking its nature for a time, as a piece of iron if heated strong enough blends with its surrounding live coals, and partakes all the properties of fire. If it be removed from the fire it again becomes a piece of cold iron, with no property of fire in it. We see that during a fight when the passions are roused to their utmost pitch and the spirit is aflame a combatant receives serious injuries to his person and sometimes even loses a limb, yet he is at the time unconscious of the pain and the loss, and carries on fighting as if nothing had happened to him, until his passion cools down, in other words the body partakes for a time of the insensibility of spirit to physical pain.

Strange exploits
of an Egyptian
Fakir

Recently reports were published in the papers that an Egyptian Fakir, a Muslim, gave public exhibitions in London before a crowded audience of his most wonderful powers, which astounded the medical men, and the public at large. One feat of his was extra ordinary. A grave several feet deep was dug in the middle of the theatre. The fakir then laid himself down in the grave. An airtight coffin was placed over him covering his body and the grave filled up with fine sand, so that no air could reach him. Half an hour afterwards the sand and the coffin were removed and the Fakir came out of the grave hale as ever. Men who have developed their soul power by constant spiritual exercises fasting, night vigils etc., can do wonders. They can subsist without food for weeks and months and retain their vigour. They can walk over the ocean, as Jesus (peace on him!) is said to have done, and perform other wonders, which men whose spirit is crushed under a super abundant weight of animality cannot understand and much less perform. As the deaf cannot taste the ecstasy of music or the blind feel the attractiveness of colour, so men in whom sheer animality preponderates cannot utilize nor understand the wonderful powers of the soul. They are practically brutes in human shape. As the body is liable to disease, so is the spirit. The most Compassionate Allah out of His Infinite Mercy to His

Creators has been sending Apostles into the world to cure the spiritual diseases of mankind. They make rules for their followers, which if properly followed would purge the spirit of its contamination with flesh and blood, and bring it back to its normal purity. The Holy Qoran has laid down "Prosperous is he who purifies himself and remembers the name of the Lord, and prays! Nay! but ye prefer the life of this world, while the hereafter is better and more lasting"—(Chapter 87 14-16)

The Holy Prophet has said that every Muslim's namaz is his ascension. It is a great mistake to suppose that namaz consists of certain attitudes of the body, such as standing bowing making genuflections and of recitation of

certain formulae and texts from the Holy Qoran. It is mainly a spiritual exercise—its great mystery lies in the concentration of mind and the assimilation or merging of one's soul into the great universal Spirit. The Islamic Namaz as taught by the Holy Prophet (God's peace and blessings on him!) brings one face to face as it were with his Creator, and leads to absorption in Him. Without

this concentration of mind, namaz would be a body without a soul. Once a barbed arrow pierced a leg of Hazrath Ali which he allowed no one to withdraw, on account of intense pain. The leg swelled and jammed the arrow into the flesh all the more tightly, causing excruciating pain and suffering. When the matter was brought to the notice of the Holy Prophet he directed that the arrow should be drawn out when Hazrath Ali was making his namaz. Several men then pulled it out while he was so engaged. The arrow came out bringing along with it a mass of flesh, with great discharge of blood and leaving a gaping hole in the leg. Hazrath Ali never felt the pain of extraction—he only noticed it after the namaz was over. Such is the absorption of a true Muslim in his namaz. It has been rightly and properly called the ascension of every Muslim. What other action can exercise such a purifying and ennobling effect upon a man's soul than that of standing with love and fear before the Lord

glorifying Him and offering homage and prayer, and supplicating for mercy and guidance from Him, in all humility of spirit, accompanied with appropriate attitudes of the body, and laying its noblest part, the head, on the ground before His Lord and Creator in token of complete resignation to His will? Hence the performance of namaz five times a day is made compulsory on every Muslim.

The serene felicity of the soul after a well conducted namaz has to be felt and cannot be described in words. No doubt spirit is the most wonderful gift of Allah to man. But it can work either way. Whilst on the one hand it can raise a man even above the angels, on the other it can drag him down lower than the brutes. Training, association, environment and circumstances exert great influence over it. As the body becomes diseased owing to a thousand different causes, so the spirit also becomes vitiated. As the Merciful Allah has created the science and art of medicine and also doctors capable of curing the body, so He has sent Apostles into the world to cure diseased souls. As it is in the physical world so it is in the spiritual both are analogous to each other. But whereas the body whether sound or diseased will perish sooner or later, the spirit is eternal and has no ending. Hence its greater importance. How impressively has Jesus (peace on him!) pointed out the superiority of the soul by saying "What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" So have said all the Apostles before and after him.

Some people wrongly suppose that mere faith is enough to secure salvation. Jesus (peace on him!) on being asked by a Jew what he should do to gain salvation promptly replied "Obey God's Commandments." He did not say simply believe in God and do what you please and you would gain salvation. The subtly dangerous doctrine that it is Faith alone which ensures salvation, that action is quite unnecessary and that the law was intended for the wicked only, and those that obey and act according to law are cursed and not entitled to the Grace of God, was introduced into the pure religion taught by Jesus (peace on him!) later, by those who did not wish well for Christianity.

Action and
 indispensable to
 prove faith

This dangerous addition has wrought a world of mischief and has misled many simple souls. The Holy Qoran therefore repeatedly points out this grievous error. Wherever mention is made of the blissful abodes in Paradise, it is invariably affirmed that they will be inherited only by those, "who believe and do good actions". This latter qualification seems to be essential for admission into that happy region. Chapter 67, verse 2 runs thus, "We created death and life, to try you, which of you does best, for He is the Mighty, the Forgiving". Here Allah explicitly affirms that the very object of creation is to judge which of His Creatures **Does** best, that is, does most good. In another place chapter 101 verses 5 and 6 it is laid down thus, "And as for those whose balance (of good actions) is heavy, he shall be in a well pleasing life. But as for him whose balance is light his dwelling shall be the pit of hell". The Holy Prophet has said 'He is the best of men who does the most good to his fellow men'. In chapter 25, Gospel of St. Mathew Jesus (peace on him!) is said to have related the following parable. A certain master distributed several talents (ancient measure of money) amongst his three servants and bade them carry on trade therewith. To the first he gave five talents, to the second two and to the third only one. After a time when the master took a reckoning from the servants, the first and second produced double the amounts they had been given having successfully traded with their talents but the third who had kept his talent buried in the earth produced only the one talent he had received. The master was well pleased with the first two servants, and promised them a great reward and praised them as his good faithful servants. The third he scolded him a slothful wicked servant, and took away the one talent originally given to him and ordered that the unprofitable servant should be cast into darkness where there was weeping and gnashing of teeth. What a beautiful and instructive parable! Talents have been given by Allah to all men in various measure and on the great day of reckoning, everyone will have to show what use he had made of the talents given him. Mere faith without action is of comparatively lesser value. It is

like the body of a palsied person, who though nominally alive cannot use his limbs nor do work of any kind. Of what use is such a person's life? Faith must be proved by good actions. It is easy for every one to say that he possesses faith in the Omnipotence and Omnipresence of Allah. Mere assertion without proof is of no value. If for instance, a thief had perfect faith in the existence of Allah, and also in His power to punish offenders and in the fact that He is present everywhere and always watching that happens, the thief dare not commit theft in the face of all these facts. Offences are committed only when offenders are wanting or wavering in their belief or at least forget it at the time of committing offences. Faith is like seed and good actions are the product. If you have variety of good seeds capable of producing fragrant flowers and luscious fruit if sown and yet you sow them not, how can you expect to gather fruit or flowers either? Of what use is such possession? If your doctor gives you medicine to take and instructs you as to what things to eat and what to avoid, how can you hope to be cured of your disease if you neither take the medicine nor observe the prescribed diet, however firm your faith may be in the capability of the doctor and the efficacy of his medicine? The celebrated philosopher, moralist, and poet Saadi says "However much knowledge and however profound learning you may acquire, if you do not benefit yourself by acting according to its behests, you will neither be sage nor a philosopher, but only a charlatan—a mere animal with a pack of books on its back"

As regards the ascension of the Holy Prophet to the seventh heaven, you may believe either way as your judgment decides. It might have been with the body or in spirit, seeing that both methods are quite within the power of Allah. It is not an essential article of faith for a Muslim. The main question with which we are concerned is not in what way he was taken up, but what things were revealed to him there. Some of these he has divulged and some he has not. Our business is to gather knowledge from what

has been divulged, and profit by it. It is a waste of time to indulge in profitless polemical discussions.

Three days after the conversion of Hazrath Hamza, Conversion of Hazrath Omar, also a very brave and powerful chief, hearing of the conversions to Islam that were going on increasingly in spite of elaborate counter propaganda by the Qorish determined to put an end to the life of the Holy Prophet. With this view he started fully armed and with a drawn sword in hand to go up to the Holy Prophet. In the way some one told him that his own sister and her husband had turned Muslims and that he would do well first to look after them. Full of wrath, he entered his sister's house where the Holy Quran was being read at the time and which was stopped on his arrival. Hazrath Omar encountering his sister and brother-in-law and being in a rage assaulted them both and wounded them with his sword. On seeing blood run out of his sister's body he somewhat relented. His sister cried out "Brother, first listen to what we were reading and if you should not approve of it, you may kill us afterwards." He then desired them to read on. The chapter entitled "Ta Ha" was recited to him. He listened attentively and as the recitation was concluded, a change came over his mind. He quietly left them and went up to the Holy Prophet, who was sitting on a hillock at that time. When Hazrath Omar approached with the sword hanging by his neck, the Holy Prophet asked him why he had come to him. "I have come to become a Muslim and submit myself to Allah, and His Prophet" was the reply. The Holy Prophet and those present, all cried out "Allaho Akbar!" (This exclamation is made by Muslims whenever anything surprising or extra ordinary happens.) The conversion of Hazrath Omar was thus miraculous and the would be slayer of the Holy Prophet became the future second Caliph who shook the world by his conquests and was the greatest propagator of Islam. The joining of these two mighty chiefs to the Islamic camp was a very great acquisition, for both were redoubtable heroes. Soon afterwards Hazrath Omar persuaded the Holy Prophet to

carry on the namaz in Kaaba in public and himself stood guard with a drawn sword in hand proclaiming that if any one dared to molest the devotees he would at once behead him, and no one dared. Such are the changes which the Lord God brings about in the hearts of men!

The defection of Hazraths Hamza and Omar from their party was a great loss to the Qoreish, and being incensed thereat, and full of wrath they convened a large meeting and after discussion resolved to out-caste the Holy Prophet and his tribe, the Benu Hashim. They drew up articles of agreement binding themselves not to talk to, to buy from, nor sell to Hazrath Muhammad (peace and blessings on him!) and the Benu Hashim, in fact, not to have to do anything with them in future and warning all pilgrims and strangers from approaching them. They hung up the parchment on the door of the Kaaba. They also forced the Benu Hashim to leave their homes and go and live in a ravine in the hills, the entrances to which they constantly guarded, so that no one could succour them. They cut off all supplies of the necessities of life to them. The reader can imagine their woeful plight. The valley rang out with the cries and wailings of the poor hungry children and women. The Holy Prophet and his adherents bore this captivity patiently for three long years, yet their fortitude was not shaken. The Qoreish grew tired at last of keeping a watch and guard over the valley and the more tender-hearted of them began secretly to furnish the prisoners, with supplies. It was also discovered that the white ants had destroyed the whole of the parchment hung up on the door of the Kaaba. They finally withdrew their watch and the tribe issued out of their prison and returned to their homes. The Qoreish had expected that adoption of such drastic measures towards him might cool down the Holy Prophet's ardour for the preaching of Islam but the result was quite the contrary to what they had expected. As a brave swimmer at sea while buffeting with adverse waves puts forth greater strength when a

bigger wave dashes against him, so the Holy Prophet's exertions were rather increased, and he began to preach with greater assiduity than ever. One day as he was passing along a street, a number of the chief of Qoreish were sitting conversing together, Abu Jehl who was one of them derisively cried out "Lo! there goes your Prophet!" On hearing those words the Holy Prophet turned towards him

A strange prophecy by the Holy Prophet and how it came true

and said "The day is fast approaching when you will laugh less and weep more" and then addressing the whole assembly said "Though you are at present dead set against Islam, the day is not far off when you will all without exception embrace it as

your religion, of your own free will" The reader must be informed that within a little above a year Abu Jehl was killed at the battle of Bedr, and the whole of the assembly did actually embrace Islam at the fall of Mecca, within three or four years. Judging from all circumstances then existing, the very small number of men who had turned Muslims by that time, their poor and helpless condition, the persecutions they were undergoing and looking at the mighty power and influence of the Qoreish and their strong opposition to Islam such a prophecy would appear to be extremely improbable, but subsequent events proved the truth of it to the letter. This is only one out of several thousand prophecies which the Holy Prophet has made. Many of them have already been fulfilled some are being fulfilled in our own times, and the rest will certainly come to pass in due time. The reader must not suppose that prophets themselves have any fore knowledge of coming events it is Allah that gives them that knowledge of the future and hence the prophecies of a true prophet of Allah never go wrong, however unlikely they may seem at the time they are made.

Prophecies discussed. As some misconception exists regarding prophecies also as with regard to miracles, it would not be amiss to say a few words regarding them. It is a fundamental belief of Islam

that the Almighty Allah alone knows futurity its pages are closed to all others, no human being prophet or saint shares with Him this knowledge. If any foolish Muslim were to hold that prophets and other holy men possess the power of knowing the future, he would be associating him with Allah and would be out of the pale of Islam. But sometimes He out of His Grace and for His own reasons reveals by inspiration to His chosen servants some future events and the person thus inspired reveals the secret to others if Allah permits him to do so. A prophecy is not based on observation, or calculation of the circumstances existing at the time or on previous experience. On the other hand prophecies are made about events which would appear on the face of them apparently impossible, such that no human being judging from appearances or having regard to the general tenor of things in his experience can anticipate or consider likely. Being direct revelations from Allah to the prophet, prophecies can never fail to be fulfilled, however strange they may seem at the time. When the prophecy was made, the total number of Muslims existing upon the face of the earth did not exceed a few hundreds some two or three at the most, and their opponents, the mighty tribe of Qoreish and their allies numbered hundreds of thousands, and were so powerful, so strong and so persecuted and oppressed the helpless Muslims and with such rancour that according to all appearances, it would have been the height of optimism to hope that few Muslims might survive the persecutions they were undergoing. That the Holy Prophet should have foretold in such circumstances that all his enemies would become converts to his faith and take their oath of allegiance to him, on their bended knees supplicating for his pardon and mercy within a short time, appeared chimerical and extremely ridiculous to the unbelievers. But the event happened just as it was foretold. That was indeed a prophecy inspired by Allah.

Yet a far stranger Prophecy was made by the Holy Prophet, a few years later. When

Another and a stranger Pro-
phesy

Medina was besieged by the Qoreish and their allies with a large army and the besieged Muslims, far smaller in number, were digging a trench around their place as a defence against the cavalry of the enemy, the Holy Prophet was engaged personally in digging the trench together with his companions, a large piece of rock in the ground obstructed further digging No one could break that stone The Holy Prophet then smashed it into pieces with two blows with a sledge, and each time he cried out "Allah o akbar!", or "Allah is Great!" When those near him asked him why he had made that exclamation, he replied that Allah had shewn him that the banner of Islam would float shortly over the palaces of the Roman and Persian Emperors, the two most powerful monarchs at the time The prophecy was fulfilled to the letter within a few short years There are some thousands of such prophecies made by the Holy Prophet Those interested may consult larger books about them

Two heavy losses to the Holy Prophet

In the tenth year of his mission the gaurdian uncle Abu Taleb, who had brought him up, and ever shielded him from harm, passed away, and within three days of this bereavement, his noble and affectionate wife, the very first convert to Islam and who had spent all her wealth in the service of Islam left him a widower Great was the grief of the Holy Prophet but he bore it manfully, and never swerved from his duty This year was called the 'Year of Mourning'

His visit to Tayef

The Holy Prophet then passed through the suburbs of Mecca, preaching to all the clans dwelling therein, and proceeded up to Tayef accompanied only by one attendant At Tayef, however he met with severe opposition, the

chieftains of that city set up the street rable against him. They not only prevented him from preaching, but also stoned him so much that he fell down senseless and was literally bathed in his own blood. The blood running into his boots, so glued his feet to the leather that he could not take them out to wash, while making his ablution for Namaz. His attendant carried him to a shelter close by, and sprinkled water on his face and washed the blood. When he revived it was suggested that he might curse those that had maltreated him in that manner. He replied, 'Why should I curse these people, though they themselves may not become Muslims, I am sure their children will become good Muslims.' He then returned to Mecca.

Of course the double bereavement of the Holy Prophet that is the demise of his beloved wife, and his dear uncle, afforded great satisfaction to his enemies the Qorish, and they now set about in earnest concerting measures for doing away with him. A secret

The Qorish
conspire to kill
the Holy Pro-
phet

meeting of all the chiefs was held in which was also an old man whom nobody had seen before, and who on being asked who he was gave out that he was a man of Nejd and a bitter enemy of the Holy

Prophet, and he mysteriously disappeared soon after the council was over. The Muslims believed that he was no other than Satan. Hence the 'Sheikh of Nejd'

The Sheikh of
Nejd

is a title given to Satan by the Muslims, even *now a days*. The proceedings began

One member suggested that the Holy Prophet should be enticed into a den, and there enchained and the door walled up with brick and mortar, so that he might die a lingering death from starvation. The Sheikh of Nejd objected to this saying that the news of his confinement would surely be out, and his followers would not only rescue him, but also would wreak their vengeance on them all. Another proposal was to tie him up to an unruly machievous camel, and to let it loose in a forest, so that the animal might kill

him This also was not approved of, "For", said the Sheikh, "you all know how great are his powers of persuasion, and to whatever place the camel may take him he will be sure to win over the people there with his enchanting word, and come back with an army" After several such proposals, Abu Jehl, the president of the assembly at last brought out a suggestion which met with unanimous approval He proposed that every clan living in, and around Mecca should send up one or two men to represent the clan and that all such men should make a cordon round the house of the Holy Prophet during night, and when in the morning he should come out to say his prayers, all of them should at once pierce him with their swords, and cut him down to pieces The advantage of this manœuvre was said to be that if all the clans took part in the murder the Holy Prophet's tribe could not possibly make war on them all, and no blood feud would result The assassination was determined upon, and the Qoreish awaited an opportunity to carry it out We will see later how far the Qoreish succeeded

CHAPTER V

In the eleventh year of the Holy Prophet's mission
 Some men of at the period of the Hajj of Kaaba,
 Medina turn one night as the Holy Prophet was return-
 Muslims ing home, he heard some people of Medina
 talking together on a small hillock He forthwith went
 over to them and addressed them in his usual sweet
 persuasive style He explained to them the folly of
 worshipping idols of their own making, which were
 lifeless and could not drive away a fly from their faces,
 they could neither hear those who supplicated them
 nor could they render them any help In contrast to
 them he glorified Allah, the Living All-powerful and
 All-knowing, who created the world, and who was
 Merciful beyond measure to His creatures, and ever
 willing and able to succour them. These Medinites
 had heard from the Jews and the Christians living in

their city Medina that as foretold by Moses, Isaiah, and other prophets of the Old Testament, and by Jesus (peace on them all !) latterly that a prophet of God was to appear in the world, and when they heard the convincing words of Hazrath Muhammad (peace and blessings on him !) they became sure in their minds that he was the expected prophet, and at once turned Muslims. These men were only six in number. When they went back to Medina they proclaimed to all that the expected prophet had already appeared at Mecca and had made Muslims of them. They also began to explain to the people with all the zeal of new converts the rational and noble tenets of Islam. They thus made many converts and the Holy Prophet's name and teachings became familiar to the people of the city. Next year another party of twelve Medinites adopted Islam at the hands of the Holy Prophet. The oath of allegiance which the converts took consisted of the following stipulations, *viz*,

- (1) We will worship the Only True God, Allah
The oath of all
 egiance taken
 from convert always and will not associate with Him
 any partner
- (2) We will refrain from committing murder,
 theft and adultery
- (3) We will not kill our offspring (girls)
- (4) We will not make false imputations against
 any one, nor will we back-bite or slander
- (5) We will obey the Prophet of God, in every
 good thing.

When these men were about to return to Medina, the Holy Prophet sent one of his followers, Hazrath Mus'ab bin Umair with them, at their request, to teach them the ordinances of Islam in detail and also to preach to the people at large. This

Hazrath Mus'ab
 bin Umair goes to
 Medina to preach
 Islam

Mus'ab belonged to a very wealthy family. He was born with the proverbial silver spoon in his mouth. He was brought up in great luxury. He ate the daintiest food, and wore the costliest apparel. When he rode several slaves ran before and after him in cavalcade. When he adopted Islam, he gave up all this finery, became a missionary and led a simple ascetic life. He contented himself with a single piece of coarse woollen stuff to cover his body, and the ends of it he joined in front with Babul thorns. As ordered by the Holy Prophet he went over to Medina in company with the new converts and put up with Hazrath As'ad bin Zirrarah and began to preach and make converts to Islam. One day he and his host with some other Muslims were seated together devising plans how to introduce Islam into the two most powerful clans at Medina, the Beni Abdul Ashhal and the Beni Zafar. At the same time the chiefs of the said two clans were also conversing together in another place. Their names were Sa'ad bin Mu'az and Usaid bin Husair. The former said to the latter "How careless have you grown of your clan! Do you not see that As'aq and his guest are fooling our people and converting them to the new religion before our very eyes and we are doing nothing to prevent it. I would have put a stop to it by force but as As'ad is my first cousin, I cannot go against him. You have no such excuse, go out at once and warn them not to preach to our people any longer." Usaid at once armed himself and going up to Hazrath Mus'ab and his host began abusing them and using threatening language. Hazrath Mus'ab very meekly replied "If you kindly sit here with us a while and listen to what we have to say, it can bring you no harm. Should you dislike our discourse, you may forget it, and think no more about it." On listening to this mild speech, Usaid sat down and bade him go on with what he had to say. Hazrath Mus'ab then made such a convincing speech, exposing the folly of bowing before stones and idols of their own making, forgetting their Creator the Almighty Allah, who alone was able to give them help, protection

and prosperity that Usaid turned a Muslim on the spot. He then told them that he would send Sa'ad bin Muaz to them, and if they should succeed in making him a Muslim also, his whole clan would become Muslims with him. Saying this Hazrath Usaid went back to where Sa'ad was sitting. "Well, how has it fared with you? Have you succeeded in dissuading those men from preaching amongst our people?" "O! it is alright, they have promised to abide by our orders. But I saw that several men of the Beni-Haritha your old clan enemies have come there and they were all armed and about to kill As'ad because he is your cousin." Hearing this Saad at once took up his arms and hied to his rescue, but, seeing him seated peacefully with Hazrath Mus'ab, he began to abuse them as well as Usaid who had played him a trick. Hazrath Mus'ab let him talk on to his heart's content without replying and when his heat abated a little asked him to sit down which he did. In short the recent drama was re-enacted and Hazrath Saad became one of the believers. Then he called forth his whole clan and addressing them asked what kind of man they took him to be and how far they relied upon his judgment. They replied that he was the best man and the wisest ruler they had ever seen, and they fully relied upon his judgment, and wisdom. "Then", said he, "be it known to you all that my eyes have been opened, and I have received the light of Islam. I shall have nothing more to do with you, unless you turn Muslims also." Before the evening the whole clan had become Muslims. Islam thus spread at Medina to a considerable extent.

The first six Medinites on returning to their city became very zealous preachers. Many Jewish and Christian divines and learned men were living then in their city, and from them these men had often heard that a great Prophet was expected to come into the world, according to the prophecies of most of the prophets of the Old Testament, as also those of Jesus and his apostles (peace on them all!) When they heard the discourse

One whole clan
converted in a
day

The earliest
Medinite con-
verts became ze-
alous missionaries

of the Holy Prophet, they were convinced that he was the same prophet that was expected by both the nations. On returning to Medina they proclaimed that 'that prophet who was long expected had actually *risen* at Mecca and had discoursed with them, proving to them the folly and futility of idol worship'. "He has opened", continued they, "our eyes and made manifest to us the All-pervading everlasting presence of the Almighty Allah, the sole Creator and Lord of the Universe". The reader will carefully note the import of their talk. They talked as if the Holy Prophet had made them actually see their Lord with their eyes. We all know that no human being can look upon his Creator with his eyes in this world. But prophets of Allah whose great function is to draw God's creatures towards Him are endowed with such extraordinary powers that they can open the mental vision of those whom they choose in a moment and make them see things to which they were utterly blind before. They impregnate their minds with such perfect faith that no room is left for doubt or suspicion.

It must be understood that the so-called believers in any religion do not possess the same degree of faith. We find such a great prophet as Jesus (peace on him!) frequently chiding his elect disciples for their want or littleness of faith. Faith or belief varies with different people. Persons possessing the substance of this world more than their actual requirements are called 'rich' but all rich men are not millionaires. Similarly those that profess faith are called 'believers' or 'faithful' but all believers do not possess the same amount of faith. The great Al-Gazali explains it in this way. Suppose you behold smoke rising from a certain place, you will at once believe that fire is there. But if you were told that what you saw was not really smoke but only an exhalation of gasses from the earth resembling smoke, your first belief would be shaken. Again if you saw the fire with your own eyes from a distance, your belief in the existence of fire at the place would no doubt be stronger. But if a scientist

were to explain to you that what you saw was not real fire but only a phosphoric appearance resembling fire which at times occurs on marshy miasmatic grounds, your belief in fire in spite of your having seen it would also be shaken as in the case of the smoke. But supposing you went up to the fire and actually touched it with your hand so that it was scorched, then no amount of counter-argument can shake your belief in the existence of fire. This last kind of belief is the fullest belief not to be shaken in any circumstances. Persons professing faith in the existence of Allah and His Omnipotence differ greatly in their belief. Some believe in Him as a matter of hearsay because so many others say traditionally that there is a God, they also think there may be One. This is the poorest kind of faith. Some others pay the question a little more attention. They look at the wonders of Creation, the regular alternation of Day and Night, the uniform transit of the planets and stars, each in its own orbit, never swerving from their fixed path nor clashing with one another in spite of their astounding vast numbers, the punctual phenomena of the tides, the judicious rotation of the seasons and similar wonders of Nature and argue that a Creator or Designer must exist, and must have set nature to work according to fixed unalterable laws. This is the faith of the second degree. But sometimes it happens that men with such a belief relying upon arguments fall into doubt owing to erroneous reasoning or perversion of intellect, and become atheists or sceptics. Those however who were taken by the Holy Prophet right as it were into the presence of their Maker, could never be shaken in their faith. Of this class were the Martyrs. They would rather lose their lives than swerve from their faith. Now all the companions and disciples of the Holy Prophet were men of this class. The Holy Prophet exercising his spiritual power and influence over them, the eyes of their mental vision which had been blind before began to see at once and they felt the All-pervading presence of their Lord. Nor is this a passing belief. A piece of iron

on being rubbed with a magnet becomes itself a magnet in turn and inherits all the properties of the parent magnet. The All-wise Allah bestowed this power upon all His Prophets, but only in such measure as the times required. The previous prophets were mostly tribal prophets. Jesus (peace on him¹) himself admitted that he had not been sent but for the lost sheep of Israel (St Matthew—15 24)

But the Holy Prophet Hazrath Muhammad (God's peace and blessings on him¹) was sent as a world Prophet and was hence endowed with this Power in a pre eminent degree. Hence those sudden conversions he effected, of his bitterest enemies into obedient Muslims. Several men at different times went up to slay him with drawn swords in their hands—consider how bitter must have been their hatred of him which determined them to put an end to his life—but on seeing him and listening to a few words of his threw down their swords and fell at his feet and thenceforth became his devoted slaves for all time. Not one of them turned away from him, or from the religion taught by him. Several suffered martyrdom by torture for their faith in him, almost all suffered untold hardships, loss of wealth, loss of friends and relations, and even had to go into exile. What was the

The secret of sudden conversions of avowed enemies and of their staunch faith

secret of it all? Hazrath Muhammad (God's peace and blessing on him¹) possessed neither kingdom nor treasure. He had not a standing army under him to carry out his orders, yet he ruled by right Divine. He never forced anyone to believe in him. On the other hand he himself suffered persecution at the hands of his enemies persecution of all conceivable kinds, and only saved his life by going into exile. What was there in him that people flocked to him as if by magic but that God bestowed upon him the power of opening the eyes of the mentally blind and enlivening dead hearts? Is not this a far greater miracle than converting a piece of stick into a serpent, since the subject of the miracle is

a human being the noblest of Allah's creatures? Nor can it be said that those that went over to him were only men strong of limb and weak in intellect, on the other hand they were men of culture poets, orators chiefs of their clans, some of them possessing the rarest intellect, men like the four Caliphs and others who were the conquerors and rulers of the world, history failing to show their likes. At the time of their conversion neither fear, nor avarice could have prompted them to embrace Islam for the prospect was highly somber and quite disheartening. What then was it but God's Truth that impelled them to follow the Holy Prophet? For Islam if properly understood and followed does really lead to the Holy Presence of Allah and brings its votaries face to face as it were with their Creator. After that there could be no more doubt nor defection. These sudden conversions are not mere fictitious instances but they are stern historical facts. European biographers are at a loss to account for them, they simply skip over the matter and yet they must be explained by the historian, being historical facts. There is no other way of accounting for them than by admitting that it was all will of the Almighty Allah and that He worked these miracles by the hand of His Chosen Apostle. Otherwise the matter remains an insoluble enigma.

CHAPTER VI

As for the companions of the Holy Prophet it would be the height of folly to judge them by our own debased standard, we that possess so little faith and are steeped in ignorance and sin. Having had the rare good fortune of receiving tuition from the greatest master the world has produced and the further advantage of living with him, undergoing a life-long training under him, every one of them became a super man. If their lives be studied in detail it will be found that each was a hero and a saint in himself. For the Holy Prophet's

About compa
nions of the Holy
Prophet

society and tutelage purged them of their animality, and all gross sinister passions and filled their hearts with all noble sentiments and laudable aspirations. Their one aim in life was to purify themselves and make themselves fit for the company of their great Teacher in heaven and of their Creator. "Behold", said the Holy Prophet once pointing to Hazrath Abu Bekr as he was passing before him, "there goes a live corpse", that is shorn of all evil passions or thoroughly purified. Such was the reaction his companions showed to his noble influence. We may cite few illustrations.

When the Holy Prophet called for subscriptions from them for the expedition to Tabuk, Hazrath Abu Bekr produced all that he possessed in the world before the Holy Prophet and on being asked by him what he had left for his family and children replied, "Allah and His Apostle"

Another companion, a poor labourer, by trade, brought two measures of date fruit and placing them before the Holy Prophet, addressed him thus "O Prophet of Allah! the whole of last night I drew water from a well to irrigate a garden and got four measures of dates as my hire, one half of it I gave to my wife and children as their ration for the day and the other half I have brought here. I pray it may be accepted and utilized in the service of Allah". The Holy Prophet accepted the gift and caused the dates to be placed on top of the heap of gold and silver that was accumulated there.

Hazrath Ali, a son-in-law of the Holy Prophet was once challenged to mortal combat in the cause of Allah and Islam by a famous athlete, a Jew. He accepted the challenge and after a brave fight threw his adversary down and with his knee on his chest put his scimitar over his throat.

Hazrath Abu
Bekr's liberality
and dependence
on Allah

A poor compa-
nion's donation
to the war fund
of Islam

Hazrath Ali's
magnanimity
and piety

The Jew being about to be killed in his trepedation spat upon the face of Hazrath Ali. Immediately Hazrath Ali removed the scimitar and getting up told his adversary that his life was spared and that he was free to go. Astonished at this behaviour, the Jew asked him his motive for it. Hazrath Ali replied "There has been no enmity between you and me. You challenged me to fight in the way of the Lord. I did so and Allah made me the victor. I was about to kill you to please Allah and not to please myself, for ours was not a personal private fight, but when you spat at me my anger was roused and if I had killed you then, it would have been to please myself. I did not wish to sully what I did for Allah, exclusively, with personal motives of revenge. Hence I let you go." The Jew at once begged his pardon and became a Muslim on the spot, observing that such superfine religion must indeed be the true religion.

The first act of Hazrath Omar on being elected Caliph was to divorce his favourite wife whom he dearly loved lest, by her influence over him she might interfere with the discharge of his public duties as Caliph or make him do what he ought not to do or omit what he ought to

Hazrath Omar's
piety and fear of
the Lord

Upon a certain occasion, tribute from a province was brought to Hazrath Omar at his house. Among other things it had a bottle of musk in it. While placing on the ground the bottle was uncorked by accident and a few grains of the musk fell on the floor. They were carefully picked up and restored to the bottle. His wife wiped the bottle with her apron, which became slightly scented. When Hazrath Omar felt the scent he washed and washed the apron repeatedly and did not cease washing till the scent was gone entirely, remarking to his wife that she had no right to utilize the fragrance of an article which was to go into the Bait-ul mall or public assets. So great was the change wrought among the companions of the Prophet. Rightly therefore did he remark that every one of his companions was like a guiding star to future Muslims.

They first accepted Islam at great cost to them, they endured great hardships and patiently bore the persecution by their enemies on account of their Islam and finally it was through their strenuous exertions that Islam has reached us. They spared no pains and cheerfully sacrificed their very lives in the cause of Islam. They thus deserve the highest veneration from Muslims of the present day all the world over. They lived night and day, in the presence and fear of the Lord, nor did they for a moment forget that they were being incessantly watched by Him. They laboured all day long in the cause of Islam and they devoted all their nights to standing in prayer and supplication before Him. Such men can ever hardly even think of committing any sin. They have been therefore properly called guiding stars to all Muslims. A detailed study of their lives will teach the Muslims of the present day the meaning of true Islam and will greatly benefit them.

The second oath of allegiance
In the thirteenth year of the mission, a party of Medin-
ites composed of seventy-three men and
two women accompanied the caravan from
Medina and reaching Mecca presented
themselves before the Holy Prophet. Some
of them had already embraced Islam and the rest were
ready to embrace it. They entered into an agreement
with the Holy Prophet, beseeching him to go over to their
city. The terms of the agreement were that they should
obey the Holy Prophet in all good things and should
defend him and his adherents as they would defend their
own families and render all assistance in their power to
propagate Islam, the Holy Prophet giving them an assur-
ance on his part that he would live all his life at Medina
and never desert them. Joyfully taking their oath of
allegiance they went back to their native city.

The Holy Prophet leaves for Medina.
The poor persecuted Muslims had already left Mecca
some going to Abyssinia, and the rest to
Medina. When almost all had left and
there remained only Hazraths Abu Bekr
and Ali with the Holy Prophet, the Qoreish

thought it a favourable opportunity to carry out their resolution of killing him. With this object, a band of armed men surrounded his house during a night. Their object was to kill him early the next morning when he would come out for his morning prayer, for the Arabs never entered into their enemies' houses to kill them but awaited their coming out. The Holy Prophet being forewarned by an angel of God made Hazrath Ali lie down on his bed, assuring him that he would be perfectly safe and walked out of the door right through his enemies, none of whom could see him go out, and went to the House of Hazrath Abu Bekr, whence they both started for Medina. Going on foot some four or five miles they took refuge in a cave on Mount Thaur. In the morning when Hazrath Ali got up and it was discovered that the Holy Prophet had made his escape the chagrin and rage of the Qoreish knew no bounds. They sent out several riding parties to scour the country and proclaimed a reward of hundred camels to any one who should bring back Hazrath Muhammad (peace and blessings on him) alive or dead. Many were the men who started to capture him with the hope of obtaining the promised reward. But him whom God protects none can injure. For three days and nights the two travellers lay hid in the friendly cave. Asma a young daughter of Hazrath Abu Bekr used to carry provisions to them during nights and his son, Hazrath Abdulla kept them informed of the movements of the Qoreish. On one occasion a scouring party came up to the mouth of the cave but seeing that a spider had spun its web across it and a pair of wild pigeons were peacefully hatching their eggs close by turned back without entering into the cave thus Allah made a spider's web a shield of iron to guard the fugitives. At this juncture Hazrath Abu Beka though a brave man in fight, grew nervous and exclaimed "O prophet of God! we are but two and our enemies are many." "Nay", was the prompt reply, "the Lord is

God with us " with us, we are three, fear not, nor grieve!"

This shows how Allah was constantly in his thoughts and how entirely he relied upon His protection. It is upon occasions like these that a person speaks out his

true mind When the heat of pursuit and search abated, on the fourth day the two travellers left the cave and took their way by unfrequented paths towards Medina on two camels brought by Hazrath Abu Bekr's servant But even then they met with danger One Surakha a wild and fierce warrior chief riding on a big charger spied them from afar and eager to gain the reward galloped after them When however he came within a few yards of them, his horse suddenly reared and threw him down at the feet of the Holy Prophet This incident so overawed him that

Surakha over
takes the Holy
Prophet

he at once turned a Muslim and begging pardon for his having pursued the Holy Prophet went back The travellers continued their journey but they had yet to

encounter one more peril and this seemingly a far greater one When they neared their destination a party of

Bureida Aslami
also overtakes
him

seventy horsemen headed by their chief Bureida Aslami encountered them, they also having started to capture the Holy Prophet and gain the reward But when

Bureida came before the Holy Prophet, and the latter addressed him with a few words of wisdom and enlightenment, he at once turned a Muslim together with his seventy men Hastening his turban to a spear he carried it aloft as a standard crying aloud, 'Here comes the prince of peace, the protector of the oppressed and one who will fill the world with justice', and his men formed a body guard On the 23rd September 622 A D the Holy Prophet reached Khuba, a suburb of Medina and he rested there for four days During this time he erected a mosque there and made many converts Hazrath Ali, who had been left at Mecca to return to their owners the many valuables which they had entrusted to the Holy Prophet for safe custody, having fulfilled his commission, left Mecca and came and joined the Holy Prophet here On the Friday following, the 27th idem he left for Medina, when he reached the habitations of the Beni Salem, it was time for the Friday prayer which he performed in company with one hundred men the first Friday prayer in Islam He delivered the wing sermon on that occasion —

“All praise and thanks giving are due to Allah I glorify His name and crave all aid, bounty and guidance of Him in Him is my faith centred I do not disobey Him and hate all those who disobey I bear testimony that none else deserves our worship but He He is the sole Lord and has no Companions and Muhammad (peace and blessings on him!) is His servant and His messenger He it is that has sent Muhammad (peace and blessings on him!) with guidance, light and good precept at a time when no Prophet had appeared for ages, knowledge had decreased and ignorance prevailed He has sent him at a time when destruction and the last day are nigh He who obeys Allah and His Prophet has chosen the right path and he who disobeys is misled and debased and sunk in the deepest ignorance O Muslims! I invite you to piety The best advice a Muslim can offer to another Muslim is to bid him prepare for the life to come after death and to be pious and careful of his duty to Allah O people! avoid those things which Allah has commanded you to avoid be aloof from them There can be no better advice than this nor better remembrance Bear in mind that in matters appertaining to future life, to him who fears his Lord in all his actions, Piety will render the best aid If any person set all matters right with Allah, in his public and private doings, and this he does in all sincerity and purity of heart, he will earn a good name in this world, and after death when people will know the value of good actions, he will find a store (of good) for himself But if anybody should not do so, his mention is made in the verse of the Holy Qoran “Man would rather wish his actions hid and kept far from him” Allah warns you of Himself (i.e. His displeasure) and Allah is most merciful towards His Creatures He who believes in the truth of Allah’s commands and fulfills His commandments, Allah the Almighty has stated about such a one “The word shall not be changed with me nor am I in the least unjust to the servants” O Muslim’s! bear in mind piety and the fear of Allah in all your actions, public and private now and for ever, for the transgressions of the pious are forgiven and their recompense is enlarged It is only piety

The first Fri
day sermon given
by the Holy Pro-
phet

that illumines one's countenance, pleases the Lord and exalts one's status O Muslims! enjoy yourselves but never forget the claims of your Lord upon you It is for this that He has taught you His Book and has given you guidance towards Him, so that the truthful may be separated from the liars The Lord has treated you with great merciful consideration you also do the same towards others Those that are the enemies of Allah, think of them as your own enemies Try to walk in the way of Allah with your full dermination and perseverance He has selected you and named you Muslims (those who completely surrender themselves to Allah) so that he who is to be destroyed shall be destroyed after clear proofs and he who is to attain everlasting life shall attain it after clear proofs All good actions are done by the aid of Allah O people! remember His name and work for your future life, for he who sets right his dealings with Allah, Allah sets right his dealings with other men Beware, Allah is Almighty and rules over His creatuaes and no one can rule over Him Allah is the owner of all His creatures and no creature has any authority over him Allah is supreme over all and we derive our power to do good only from His Sublime Majesty"

Concluding the sermon he entered the city of Medina

Entry into Medina Oh what an Entry! The streets were lined throughout with spectators Doorways, windows, terraces and all available spaces were thronged with men, women and children The old, the young, the hale and the sick, all crowded out into the streets, which rang out with the cries of 'Allaho Akber', 'God is Great' 'Alhamdo-lillah' 'praise be to God', 'Subhan-Allah', 'God is Holy', and in the joy that the Holy Prophet of Allah came to dwell amongst them, little maidens were singing a chorus of welcome and jubilation with these words "From over the mountains to our south, the full moon has burst upon us What a superfine religion has he taught us and how excellent is his teaching! We are bound to render thanks to Allah for it As he has been sent amongst us by command of the Almighty, our

implicit obedience is due to him and binding on us" The city had never before seen such a day Its original name was '*Yathrab*', but in honour of the Holy Prophet it was thenceforward called '*Medina-tun-nabi*' the city of the Holy Prophet, shortened into Medina '*The City*', by way of eminence. The Holy Prophet's stay in the city was the cause of Allah's blessings showering down upon it. The climate which was unhealthy before changed into a very healthy one, the very earth became sweet smelling and it continues so till now. People who visit the city carry away some of it with them and use it as an antidote and a general panacea for all diseases. The spread of Islam entirely changed the character of the people. All vice disappeared and people were turned into civilized, sober, pious and decent citizens, extremely hospitable to strangers. Everything prospered with them and in the course of a few years such worldly wealth poured into the city as had never been seen before. The poorest citizens were made rulers and governors of countries. No doubt the Medinites had good cause to rejoice. The first act of the Holy Prophet was to select a site to erect a mosque for the worship of Allah. One was found in a suitable locality lying waste. When he gave out his intention of purchasing it for a mosque the owners, two orphans, offered it free of cost. But he did not accept the offer. He had it valued properly, and Hazrath Abu Bekr paid the price to the orphans. A mosque was built thereon, a very humble affair, with clay walls and posts of rough trunks of date trees, the top being covered with leaves of the same with earth spread over them, and adjoining it the Holy Prophet constructed two or three similar huts for himself and his family. On his arrival the Medinites vied with one another to receive him as their guest. But he replied, "My camel will take me to where I am to stay", and left it free. The animal took him to the house of Hazrath Abu Iyyoob Ansari, and there sat down. The Holy Prophet became his guest pending the completion of the huts.

Thirteen long years did the Holy Prophet spend of his mission at Mecca, enduring all sorts of opposition

Thirteen years
work at Mecca

contumely, insult, and rancorous persecution
He left it only to save his life Though
the success attained was not very encour-
aging—only a few hundred converts—but Allah having
revealed to him at Mecca the verse “And what comes
after is certainly better for thee than that which has gone
before” (Qoran 93 4), the Holy Prophet never lost heart
but was expecting better days as promised by Allah
Though the converts were not many yet they were men
like Hazraths Abu Bekr, Omar, Uthman,
Some eminent
Muslims of Mecca
and other places Ali, Mus’ab bin Umair, Jaafer-e-Tayyar,
Hamza, Abu Oheida binal Jarrah, Abdulla
bin Mas’ood, Abdur Rahman bin Auf,
Zubeir, Talha, Lubaid and several others, all supermen
The first four became Caliphs after the Holy Prophet,
whilst of the rest some were conquerors of Empires,
heroes, learned doctors, poets, all devoted to Islam, heart
and soul

Outside Mecca also Islam had begun to spread
Tufail bin Amr the ruler of Yeman had become a Muslim
and spread Islam in his province Abu Zarr Ghaflari, his
brother Unais, and through them half the Ghaffar tribe
were Muslims About twenty influential Christians of
Najaran had also turned Muslims Zamad-ul-Azawi the
famous soothsayer of Yemen, the whole tribe of Beni
Ashhal, Zamim and Namim, two influential men of
Syria and with them several others and many Abyssinians
had become Muslims Every convert soon after embracing
Islam, began to preach its ennobling principles to others
with all the zeal of a new convert Thus was the seed of
sown in places far and wide

THE HOLY PROPHET AT MEDINA

CHAPTER VII

The change in the circumstances of the Holy Prophet was very great. At Mecca he had only one tribe the Qoreish to grapple with and he had no concern with the Government of Mecca beyond protecting the poor persecuted new Muslims as far as he could. But at Medina the atmosphere was quite different. There were five classes of men. First the Muhajir or those that had come over to Medina from Mecca owing to their faith. These with a few exceptions were poor and helpless people. Second, the Ansars, or Helpers. History has seldom furnished an instance of such noble generosity and religious love as that displayed by these men. On a poor fugitive new Muslim coming from Mecca to their city, leaving his house and all behind him on account of the persecution of the Qoreish the Ansars cast lots among themselves as to who should receive him as his guest, this being settled, the host took home his guest to his house and made over to him exactly a half of his house and property with pleasure, called him his brother and was ever ready to help him to the best of his power in all his concerns. The 'Ansars' were so called because they helped the Holy Prophet and the fugitive Muslims who sought refuge with them. These 'Helpers' with a few exceptions were not a rich people many of them lived by their daily labour, but they had generous sympathizing hearts. Their love of Allah, of the Holy Prophet and of their fellow Muslim brethren was extraordinarily great. In his Apostolic capacity the Holy Prophet was the mouthpiece of Allah. To love him and obey him was to love and obey Allah. The Holy Prophet to cement the fraternal love still further amongst his followers made pairs of a Meccan and a Medinite Muslim and bade them be brothers. They respected this tie so

scrupulously and considered it so sacred that they even divided their legacies and inheritances with them to the detriment of genuine heirs. When this circumstance reached the Holy Prophet's ears, he dissolved the tie bidding them continue brethren in faith and not deprive the consanguinal heirs of their legitimate inheritances on account of this religious tie. Even up to this day the Medinite Arabs are the most hospitable to strangers.

The third class were the 'Munafiq' or 'Hypocrites'. These men headed by one Ubbaïy bin Salool, a powerful chieftain, were Muslims in name and outward appearance, but faith had not fully entered into their hearts and they were in secret league with the enemies of Islam. Their chieftain Ubbaïy had been wielding considerable power at Medina and aspiring to the rulership of the city, but the advent of the Holy Prophet put a spoke in the wheel of his ambition. Aggrieved persons resorted to the Holy Prophet for redress and not to him as before. Ubbaïy felt his power wane. He was no longer the sole arbitrator at Medina. Islam was spreading fast and the number of the adherents of the Holy Prophet was increasing by leaps and bounds. In fact his presence in the city completely eclipsed the sphere of Ubbaïy's influence. When he watched the Holy Prophet's power increase day after day and found that by Right Divine he wielded such authority as had never been wielded before by any king or emperor, he despaired of coping with him by open opposition and as a matter of policy adopted Islam and constituted himself and his adherents spies in the Islamic camp. They had free access to the councils of the Muslims and communicated secrets and plans to the Qorish and their allies. Their sinister aim was to bring about the downfall of the Holy Prophet and to prevent the spread of Islam. The Holy Prophet was fully aware of this, but impelled by his clement nature and with the consideration that an open rupture with them might make matters worse and cause strife and blood-shed amongst the Muslims, overlooked their duplicity and treated them generously. By this wise and humane policy, the Holy Prophet gained over many of Ubbaïy's

followers and when a few years later he died, he personally supervised his burial and even gave his own dress as a shroud to bury him in. His followers struck with this noble and magnanimous behaviour became sincere Muslims.

The fourth and the fifth classes of the inhabitants were the Jews and the Christians. Of these the Jews were the more numerous and the more wealthy and powerful. The Christians were neither so numerous, nor so influential. The Holy Prophet soon found that the government of the city was forced upon him without his asking for it. The Muslims of course submitted to him as next only to Allah. The veneration for him was extreme. The Hypocrites also had willy nilly to submit to him. Even the Jews brought their disputes before him for decision according to their law. Thus he became the acknowledged head of a miniature state. On the one hand, he had to safeguard the inter-

The Holy Prophet's onerous duties and wise government

ests of the Muslims, keeping in check the mischievous activities of the hypocrites and on the other, administer justice to a people composed of several different classes and to guard the safety of the state. Above all he had to discharge his onerous duties connected with his Divine Mission. Thus his life at Medina was more laborious than at Mecca. Allah gave him strength of mind and he ruled his people with wisdom, strict justice and impartiality in those troublous times.

The Holy Prophet, who by nature was a most compassionate person, loved peace and abhorred blood shed, was anxious to secure peace to all and to unite all the different tribes and religionists into one nation. With this view he drew up an agreement, some articles of which ran somewhat as follows —

A move for peace and unity

This is an agreement drawn up by Muhammad (peace and blessings on him!) the Prophet of Allah, between the Muslims of the Qoreish or of Yathrab

(Medina) on the one hand and those who are living with them or carrying on business with them on the other.

(1) All these people will be considered one nation

(2) The Jews of the Banı Awf will be treated of the same nation with the Muslims of that clan

(3) Whoever shall make war on any one of the allies shall be considered a common enemy and all shall combine to defend them and the Muslims also shall render all help possible

(4) The joint efforts of all the above said allies shall be for the common welfare, safety and benefit of all and not for working mischief or for sinful purposes

(5) During times of war the Jews shall bear expenses of the war proportionately with the Muslims

(6) The claims of tribes in alliance with the Jews shall be considered equal to those of the Jews themselves

(7) It shall be unlawful for any and all of the parties to this agreement to disturb the public peace or carry on any warfare or blood shed within the city

(8) Those that seek refuge with or come under the protection of any of the allies shall be considered as identical with those allies and shall have equal claims

(9) Should any new or unusual circumstances arise endangering the safety and goodwill of the parties to this agreement, Allah and His Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings on him !) shall decide the question

All the tribes and clans living in Medina and its suburbs expressed their concurrence and signed the agreement. As a further precaution against blood-shed the Holy Prophet went over to certain tribes living at considerable dis

tances from the city and obtained their signatures also, lest the Qoreish win them over to their side. In fact he did all that was humanly possible to ensure peace.

But the animosity of the Qoreish against the Holy Prophet and the religion he preached did not abate with his migration together with the Muslims to Medina. On the contrary it blazed out all the more fiercely as the Holy Prophet had foiled their attempts to assassinate him. Maddened with fury they wrote a threatening letter to him warning him not to be too confident of his safety at Medina, as they were coming shortly to wreak their vengeance on him. They also sent a letter to Abdullah bin Ubba'iy of Medina in the following terms:

"You people of Medina have given shelter to a fugitive from amongst us, who is our bitter enemy, in open defiance of us, the Qoreish. We have all combined and taken an oath to attack you. Take heed that we will kill all your males and make slaves of all your females unless you make war upon the Muslims and kill or drive them away from you." Upon receiving this letter, Abdullah bin Ubba'iy, who had been seeking some pretext to break out thought it a very good opportunity and made preparations to make war upon the Muslims. The Holy Prophet, however, hearing of this went boldly into the midst of their secret council and told them that the letter from the Qoreish was a vain threat and if they yielded to the bluff and fought against the Muslims, their loss would be far greater than if they disregarded it, for almost all the Muslims of Medina were men of their own clan, their brothers, cousins and blood-relations so that they would be killing their own kinsmen. On the other hand, if the Qoreish should actually come and make war upon them, the Muslims would no doubt make common cause with them (Abdullah and his followers) and drive out the

An ignominious argument of the Holy Prophet and its effect

Qoreish. This argument so worked upon their minds that they at once broke up their council and abandoned all idea of making war.

When the Qoreish saw that nothing came out of the ultimatum to the Hypocrites, they made secret overtures with the Jews and won over that fickle and mischievous race. When they were assured of their co-operation, they made preparations for a war. As a preliminary warning to the Medinites, one Quruz bin Jaber a chieftain of the Qoreish came with his men to the precincts of Medina and carried off their cattle which had been grazing there. This was done rather to show the prowess of the Qoreish that they could come from a distance of three hundred miles and carry off cattle belonging to the enemy. Abu Jehl set a false report of loat that the Muslims intended to plunder the caravan of the Qoreish that was coming from Syria laden with treasure and merchandise when it should near Medina on its way to Mecca. His object in setting afloat this unfounded rumour was to incite the people of Mecca who were interested in the caravan, to take up arms against the Muslims and in this object he succeeded. An army of one thousand warriors who had seven hundred camels and three hundred horses amongst them marched on Medina under the leadership of Abu Jehl. The caravan under the pretext of guarding which this force had been raised had already reached safely at Mecca, no one interfering with it and yet this huge force marched on towards Medina. Then it was known to the Muslims beyond a doubt that the force was really raised to attack them.

It must here be explained why the Jews in spite of having entered into an agreement of amity and friendship with the Muslims, secretly plotted with the Qoreish against them, Moses (peace on him!) the great prophet of the Jews who had rescued them from the slavery of the Egyptians and formed them into a nation who subsequently had their own kings and prophets all among the Israelites, that is the children of Jacob, Abraham's (peace on them both) grandson, for several ages, had prophesied before his death that God would raise a prophet 'Like unto him' from amongst their brethren and they should obey him when he should appear, Now

The reasons why the Jews and the Christians turned hostile to Islam

the brethren of the Israelites were the Ishmaelites Ishmeal (peace on him!) being the eldest son of Abraham God had promised to bless all the nations of the earth through his seed Several prophets had appeared amongst the children of Jacob, who was the son of Issaac, the second son of Abraham (peace on them all!) No prophet had risen amongst the children of Ishmael (peace on him!) till then The Arabs were the children of the first-born Ismael, (peace on him!) So, having in view the fulfilment of God's promise that He would bless all nations through his seed and Ishmael (peace on him!) being his first seed, the Jews were expecting a prophet from amongst the Arabs But the Jews were a very proud and haughty, stubborn and envious people, always rebelling against God, and slaying some of His prophets out of spite Both the prophets, Jesus and John the Baptist (peace on them both!), called them vipers and sons of vipers They were in the first place jealous that prophethood should leave their own line and should be shifted to the other branch This was one cause for their dislike of the Holy Prophet But there was a greater and stronger cause than this When Jesus Christ (peace on him!) appeared as the last prophet of that line and exposed the hypocrisy of the Jewish priests, how they appeared to the people very holy men—it was the mere sanctimony—and hesitated not to swallow the property of the widow and the orphan and Christ rebuked them openly they became hostile to him and casting a false imputation against the chastity of his mother Mary proclaimed that she was a fallen woman and Christ was the illegitimate issue (peace on them both!) They finally prevailed upon the Roman Governor to crucify him on the cross, holding him to be no true prophet of God but only an impostor and a mischief maker Now the Jews had all along expected that the Ishmaelite Prophet would declare them justified in their treatment, or rather mal-treatment of Jesus and Mary (peace on them both!) But when the Holy Qoran emphatically declared Jesus (peace on him!) to have been an elect of God, a prophet of high order and merit and his mother the chastest and the best woman of her time, and besides blamed them, the

Jews, killing God's prophets and altering and interpolating the text of the scriptures they became open enemies of the Holy Prophet. Many a Jew went up to him to be admitted into Islam but he invariably refused to take them in if they did not believe in Jesus' prophethood and this increased their enmity. The Holy Qoran at the same time exposed the fallacious beliefs imported into Christianity (being exact replicas of pagan sun-worship that prevailed then), for instance the sonship of Christ to Allah, the Atonement, Christs' blood-washing out the sins of the world and therefore there being no necessity to observe God's Commandments, the Pope's infallibility and unlimited power over Christians their making God only one of a godhead of three distinct personalities, their polytheistic worship of numberless saints and martyrs and dead men's bones and other real or pretended relics and their tamperings with the scriptures like the Jews and the Holy Prophet admonishing them to revert to the worship of the One True God as preached by Jesus and other prophets, (peace on them') the Christians also turned hostile to him.

CHAPTER VIII

But to return to the story. When it was definitely known that the Qoreish were approaching Medina with a large army, the Holy Prophet held a council of war. The Muhajir or the people of Mecca who had come over to Medina expressed their readiness to go out and give battle to the enemy. The Ansars said nothing. A second council of war was held with the same result. But when a third time the prophet held a council, the Ansars understood that a reply was also expected from them. Hazrath Saad bin Muaz stood up as their spokesman and delivered himself as follows:

'The prophet of Allah perhaps thinks that the Ansars are hesitating to follow him and give battle to the enemy outside the limits of the city as not binding upon them, according to their oath of allegiance, but I beg to repre-

sent on behalf of them all that the fact is not so. We are ready to do anything which the prophet pleases to order us to do. We will fight with any army and at any place the prophet directs us to. Our sword's, our purses and our very lives are at his absolute disposal. If he should be pleased to order us to plunge into the ocean, we are quite prepared to obey his order even if it costs us our lives", other Ansars also said the same thing. At this juncture a Divine revelation was vouchsafed to the Muslims permitting them to take up arms in defence of their lives and their religion. Till that time no Muslim had ever drawn his sword in defending his person, or property however much he was persecuted. Much misconception exists that Islam was forced on people at the point of the sword and this is chiefly due to the misstatements of the Christian priests to depreciate Islam, and others not knowing the true facts of the case and not caring to read the history of Islam, blindly believe in what the missionaries say. The Divine order to take up arms is given here verbatim from the Holy Koran to clear the point "Permission (to fight) is given *to those upon whom war is made because they are oppressed* and Allah is well able to assist them. Those who have been expelled from their homes without a just cause except that they say "Our Lord is Allah. And had there not been Allah's repelling some people by others, there would have been pulled down cloisters and churches, and synagogues, and mosques in which Allah's name is much remembered and Allah will help him who helps Him, for Allah is strong, mighty."

(The Qoran 22 39-40)

The reader will see that the permission granted is for *defensive* purposes and not *offensive* and it is based on three grounds,

(1) To oppose and expel those that attacked the Muslims without any just cause. The right of self defence ~~is allowed by all nations and all laws.~~

The reasons for
the Muslims tak-
ing up arms
Divine revela-
tions on the
subject

(2) The Muslims had been exiled from their homes and all their properties seized on no other ground than that they believed Allah to be their Sole Lord

(3) The third ground was the preservation and protection of all places wherein Allah's name is much remembered be they Christian cloisters and churches, the synagogues of the Jews or the mosques of the Muslims

Islam is essentially a religion of peace—its very name is derived from a root meaning peace—and therefore it abhors blood shed and strife. For fourteen long years the Muslims patiently suffered all manner of persecution, bodily injuries, derision and contempt the loss of their property and of those dear to them and some of them even suffered death. When persecution could no longer be borne, they left their dear homes, and their native place and betook themselves to a city some three hundred miles away, without striking a blow in revenge. But when the Qoreish not satisfied with this marched on them with a large force to annihilate them, they had no alternative but to take up arms in their defence. Had they not done so, they would have assuredly been butchered like sheep in a slaughter house. The reader will see that the Muslims never wanted war it was rather forced upon them. It is therefore a libel on Islam to say that it was spread by the sword. Further as the permission to fight was granted to preserve Christian churches and Jewish synagogues as well as Muslim mosques it may with equal reason be said that the sword was taken up to defend Christianity and Judaism as well as Islam, not Islam alone. Who then can blame the Muslims as aggressors? Even after the Divine permission was received the Holy Prophet owing to his merciful and forgiving nature was loath to take up arms and cause bloodshed, whereupon the following verse was revealed. "Enjoined upon you is war, but it is hateful to you. Yet it may be that ye hate a thing while it is good for you, and it may be that you love a thing while it is bad for you. Allah knows and ye do not know"

After this there remained no excuse, The Muslims, as obedient servants of Allah had to draw their swords as much to defend themselves and their city as to obey the command of Allah

When it was decided to meet the Qoreish in battle the Muslims mustered their own force, a poor one indeed. It amounted altogether to three hundred and thirteen men badly equipped and armed. There were only sixty camels, and two horses in their camp. The fighting men of the Qoreish were more than triple their number, they had seven hundred camels, and three hundred horses, and were much better equipped and armed. The Holy Prophet examined, on the day before the battle, the place where it was to be fought and pointed out to his followers the places where each of their chief enemies would fall the next day. The battle took place on a Friday, in the second year A.H. Before it commenced the Holy Prophet prayed earnestly to Allah craving His help and guidance and urging the fact that if this small band of monotheists were destroyed there would be none left in the world to remember and call on the One True God. The battle began and raged fiercely, the Holy Prophet taking no part in it personally.

The Muslims victorious Allah gave the victory to the Muslims. Seventy noted archers fell and seventy others were made captives. Abu Jahl, the leader who had collected the Qoreish army and was at the head of affairs was slain. Eleven of the fourteen chiefs who had conspired to murder the Holy Prophet fell, and the remaining three afterwards turned Muslims. The victory of the Muslims was complete, the prisoners according to the laws of war might have been put to death specially as the Muslims had suffered untold miseries at their hands and had long scores to settle with them. But the 'Merciful Prophet' (peace and blessing on him), exercised his prerogative and set them all free on payment of a small ransom. Those that were unable to pay were made to teach the children of the Ansars the art of writing in lieu of payment. Nothing could exceed the generous

treatment given to the prisoners, according to their own statement, by the followers of the Holy Prophet. The captives were distributed amongst them to be kept in custody while their case was being decided. They were

Kind treatment
of the prisoners
of war

treated more like honoured guests than prisoners of war. Their keepers fed them with their best provisions, sometimes starving themselves and their families to feed the prisoners generously. They walked while they made the prisoners ride, and allotted the best portions of their houses to them to occupy. A few days after the battle of

A fresh cons-
piracy to kill the
Holy Prophet

Beder two men of the Qoreish met together in secret. One of them was Safwan bin Ummeya, whose father had been slain in that battle, the other was Umair bin Wahab whose son was a captive at Medina and began to talk ill of the Holy Prophet. Umair said "If I had not debts to clear which I am unable to do just now, and if the prospective helplessness of my family had not appalled me, I would at once go and kill the prophet with one blow of my sword." Sufwan said "Do you go and accomplish your object, I will repay all your debts and will maintain your family as long as I live. But keep this affair secret." The compact being thus sealed Umair had his blade fresh ground and poisoned and set out for Medina. When he reached the mosque at Medina and made his camel sit down, Hazrath Omar who happened to be with the Holy Prophet in the Mosque looked at him and judging from his set face and determined look suspected his coming armed and seizing the hilt of his sword he apprised the Holy Prophet of his approach obviously with an evil intent. The Holy Prophet bade him come up close, and asked him what he had come for. "I have come to enquire after my captive son" was the reply, "What is this sword for then? Of what account is this sword, what harm have all the swords of the Qoreish done to you as yet?" "Nay, tell me the truth" demanded the Holy Prophet. Umair repeated the same reply. The Holy Prophet then asked him if he and Sufwan had not conspired together in secret to kill him, and on Sufwan's undertaking to pay off

his debts and to maintain his family as long as he should live, he (Umair) had not expressly come to smite him (the Holy Prophet) with the sword. "You do not know Umair, that Allah protects me from my enemies" added he. Umair on hearing his secret thus divulged was dumfounded, and cried out "O Prophet of Allah! my mind now bears testimony to your being a prophet of God indeed. It was easy for me to discredit your messages from Heaven but what am I to think of your revealing this secret which was known only to Sufwan and me? Thank God that He has guided me to Islam" so saying he became a Muslim, and obtaining the Holy Prophet's permission who set his son free, went back to Mecca and began preaching Islam. He made many converts. Later on Sufwan also became a Muslim.

After the defeat at Beder Abu Sufwan now the principal chief of Mecca vowed not to wash himself till he retrieved the disaster at Beder. So he came a few days later with two hundred horsemen to Medina. Leaving his cavalry in the outskirt, he put on a mask over his face and in the darkness of the night went to the house of Salam bin Mushkim the chief of the Jews. The whole night they were closeted together drinking wine and devising plans for an attack. Perhaps it was decided that the time had not yet come for an open attack. Abu Sufwan left Medina, therefore early in the morning with his cavalry. But before departing he burnt down some date trees laden with fruit belonging to the Muslims and destroyed their corn fields and barns besides killing two individuals. This outrage becoming known he was pursued by the Muslims but he had made his escape, and could not be over taken. As the riders to lighten their loads threw down the bags of meal—wheat or barley roasted and ground into meal as provision during a journey—which they carried and the Muslims picked them up, this was called in sport, the battle of the Meal-bags.

The Qoreish smarting under their defeat, made the next year far greater preparations than before. They sett

The Fourth
attack by the
Qoreish The
battle of Ohod

out their poets to invite the clans around Mecca to join them and succeeded in gaining over the tribe of Benu Kanana. A caravan returning from Syria with treasure and merchandise and one thousand camels instead of being divided amongst the shareholders was given over to the war fund. Altogether they assembled five thousand warriors of whom seven hundred were clad in complete armour and two hundred rode on steeds. They had three thousand men riding camels. This was indeed a tremendous force against the poor Muslims, but they could not help encountering it. Their force amounted altogether to a thousand men. With these the Holy Prophet marched out to meet them but Ubbaïr true to his treacherous nature withdrew the three hundred men he had brought just in the nick of time, so there remained only seven hundred to fight the five thousand. The Holy Prophet surveying the scene of action stationed some seventy of his best archers at a pass between two hills close by. His strict orders to them were not to leave the pass whatever befell the rest of the army. The two armies met and severe fighting took place. Twelve of the standard-bearers of the enemy were killed. Hazrath Ali alone cutting down eight of them. The enemy gave way and began to flee, and the Muslims then pursued them. The archers stationed to guard the pass thought that the Muslims had vanquished and were looting, the enemy Eager to share in the spoils they left their post and contrary to orders ran forward and joined in the chase, though their officer stuck to his post and was killed. The enemy took advantage of this mistake and sent through the pass their own cavalry and archers, who began to shoot from behind. The Muslims also turned back and the Muslims were thus caught between two fires. The result as might be expected was disastrous. The Muslims lost their nerve and scattered in all directions. The Holy Prophet was standing on the edge of a depression and the enemy let fly arrows and stones at him. Though he was surrounded and guarded by some of his staunch followers who never left him alone and warding off

the stones and received the arrows on their own hands and bodies to screen him, yet two or three stones hit him so severely that two of his teeth were knocked out, and the blood gushed out from his forehead, and he fell down in a faint. A false rumour was raised by the enemy that he had perished, but the Holy Prophet recovering from the faint rallied his scattered men, and took them to the top of a hillock, where they rested and the enemy dared not go up and attack them there. So satisfied with the loss they had inflicted upon the Muslims they left the plain boasting of their prowess.

The loss on the Muslim side was seventy killed, exactly the number which the Qoreish had lost at Beder. The most important of the slain was Hazrath Hamza, the Holy Prophet's uncle, a brave warrior, called the Tiger of God and His Prophet. A slave hid himself behind a boulder and so speared him, as he was advancing, that his entrails fell out. His loss caused much grief to the Holy Prophet, and he was so affected by it that long afterwards when Wahshi, the slave who had killed Hazrath Hamza turned a Muslim and appeared before him the Holy Prophet requested him as a favour to show his face before him as rarely as possible, for "Looking at your face" said he "reminds me of my dear uncle Hamza, and that gives pain." In this battle Hazraths Ali and Talha did wonders of valour. While guarding the Holy Prophet's person the latter received the arrows of the enemy into his own hand which remained benumbed for ever afterwards. When a rumour was set afloat on the battlefield that the Holy Prophet had expired, Anas bin Nazari saw that some Muslims had cast down their arms and were seated sadly in a corner. He asked them why they were sitting inactive and they replied that the Holy Prophet had been slain. "Come on then" cried he, "let us make an end of our own lives at the place where the Holy Prophet has fallen. What is the use of our living after he has departed." So saying he induced them to take up their arms and rushing at

The attachment
of the Muslims
to the Holy Pro-
phet

their head into the thick of the fight received seventy wounds and fell. Such was the zeal for the faith, and attachment to the Holy Prophet which filled the hearts of the early Muslims. Not less than this was the affection of a woman of the Benu Dinar for the Holy Prophet. After the battle was over she was asking every body she met with how the Holy Prophet was doing. When she was told that he was safe but that her husband, her brother, and her father all three had died in the battle, she said "With the Holy Prophet spared to us all calamities can be borne."

In the battle when Hazrath Hamza fell and Hazraths Ali, Omar, Abu Bekr, Talha and many others were wounded and the Holy Prophet himself had lost two teeth and received severe cuts from stones on the face and fell in a faint, some one suggested that he might curse the Qoreish for all the suffering they had caused to them. The Holy Prophet replied "No I have not been ordained to curse people but to be a blessing to them", so saying he lifted up his hands and prayed, 'O kind and merciful Allah forgive them, and guide them aright for they know me not'.

The Qoreish had in a barbarous manner mutilated and disfigured the bodies of the fallen Muslims. The body of Hazrath Hamza was cut piece meal, a portion carried aloft on a spear by Abu Sufyan as a trophy, and his wife Hinda actually tore out and gnawed his heart. She also made garlands of the noses and ears of the dead Muslims and wore them round her neck. This sight so exasperated the surviving Muslims that they vowed to avenge the cruelties and to mutilate in a worse manner the bodies of the Qoreish when the chance should occur. The following verses of the Holy Qoran were then revealed "And if ye inflict an injury, inflict the like of what has been inflicted upon you, *but if ye bear patiently, surely it will be best for the patient*. Be thou patient then * * * *". Verily Allah is with those who fear Him and do good to

others" — (Holy Qoran 16 126-128) The Muslims therefore gave up the idea

The discomfiture of the Muslims at Ohad so elated the Qoreish that Abu Sufyan their restless leader became overactive and formed a coalition with the tribes of Ghatafan and others as well as with the Jews near Khaiber and in a couple of years succeeded in raising an army ten thousand strong and marched on Medina, with the hope of annihilating Islam and the Muslims. The Holy Prophet getting timely news of this, held a council of war and as advised by Salman a Persian convert and a zealous adherent whom the Holy Prophet honoured by calling "One of his own household", had a moat or trench dug all around the city and awaited the advent of the enemy. Shortly after the hordes of the enemy approached and encamped on the adjoining hills, the Holy Prophet leaving a trusted agent behind to guard the city, advanced with one thousand men, all the force available and drew them up in lines facing the enemy on this side of the trench. The ardour of the attackers was somewhat checked on finding the obstacle of the trench which they could not cross, and they had to carry on the battle from beyond it by shooting arrows and slinging stones. Thus the siege continued for twenty days. During this time information reached the Holy Prophet that the Jewish tribe of Beni Qhureiza living in Medina and who had signed a treaty of alliance with the Muslims, were colluding with the Qoreish and preparing to make a treacherous massacre within the city while the Qoreish were harassing from the outside. The time was critical. The Holy Prophet anxious for the safety of the city deputed his general Hazrath Sa'ad bin Muaz to guard it and had to allot a portion out of his small force for this purpose. At last a spot was discovered by the besiegers where the moat was somewhat narrow, and some of the bolder spirits spurred their horses and leapt over it. A severe engagement took place in which there were losses on both sides, but at last the

f
The fifth attack
on the Muslims
by the Qoreish

The Battle of
the Moat

intruders were repulsed That night a severe storm broke out with sweeping blasts of wind and rain, thunder and lightning The tents were blown away and all lights and fires gone the horses shied and broke loose and ran off in all directions The provisions too had failed as there was no adequate commissariat arrangement, the Qoreish had not anticipated such a long stay In the midst of this general confusion, some one gave out that the storm had been raised by the enchantment of the Holy Prophet This broke the last straw, and before morning not a man nor a beast was to be seen in the camp Thus ended the Battle of the Moat

CHAPTER IX

The Qoreish after repeated attempts perceived that they could not annihilate the Muslims by force, so they changed their tactics and resorted to fraud They pretended that they wished to embrace Islam after thoroughly understanding its doctrines, after discussion with the older Muslims and so induced the Holy Prophet to send some of his learned companions with them to their different tribes and when the would-be teachers went there, treacherously murdered them This stratagem was adopted on several occasions with success They selected seven men from the tribes of Azl and Farah and sent them to the Holy Prophet They pretended that their tribes were ready to embrace Islam if a few teachers were sent to them He therefore sent ten of his learned companions with them When they reached their destination a band of two hundred armed men attacked them Eight of the ten Muslims died fighting and the remaining two were over-powered and captured They were taken to Mecca and handed over to the Qoreish who after starving them for a few days took them out to crucify At the foot of the cross they were offered the option of death on the cross or life with renunciation of Islam, which latter alternative they indignantly rejected They were then

A storm rages throughout the night and helps the Muslims

The Qoreish resort to stratagem to assassinate the Muslims

crucified and tortured Their bodies were speared all over and an inhuman ruffian piercing the side of one of them with his spear in the region of the liver asked him if he did not wish that the Holy Prophet were in his place and he (the victim) free "By Allah" he cried out, "I will not have my life saved at the risk of a tiny thorn sticking into the foot of the Holy Prophet" The extempore verses which Hazrath Qhubaib one of these two

The extempore
dirge of Hazrath
Khubaib the
Martyr on the
cross

martyrs composed and recited while undergoing torture at the cross testify to his fortitude and firmness in the faith "A vast crowd of men are standing around me, and large multitudes of men of various clans together with their women and children have been invited to witness this spectacle All these people are bent upon my destruction and inciting one another against me and I am tied up in their midst in this place of execution They have brought me near a long and strong piece of timber (the cross) They tell me that I can regain liberty if I give up my faith, but death is much easier for me than apostasy Freely though my tears are flowing yet I am not disconsolate I will not debase myself by crying out before the enemy and beseeching their compassion and mercy I am not afraid of death but I am rather afraid of the fire of hell which consumes the body and sucks up every drop of blood in it The Almighty Lord of the Ever lasting Majestic Throne has wished me to render some service on His behalf, and commanded me to be patient under affliction These men have so belaboured me that the flesh of my body has been smashed out of all conformation and I have no hope of living any longer I lay before Him only my complaint of solitary helplessness and weakness, and of what the enemies intend to do with my dead body By Allah! as I am giving up my life in the cause of Islam and in the way of Allah it matters little to me on which side I fall and in what manner I give up the ghost From the infinite mercy of Allah I hope that if He so wills it, every particle of my body will be blest' His last words were "O Allah! we have delivered the message of Thy Apostle to these

people and do Thou be pleased to apprise him of how they have dealt with us" Abu Barai Amer of Nejd also played a similar trick. He pretended to the Holy Prophet that the whole of the country of Nejd wished to turn Muslims and asked for a large party of teachers to instruct them. Some seventy learned Muslims, and according to another report forty, were sent with him. These men thus decoyed were all slain treacherously, only one of them escaped to tell the tale. One of the party bore a letter to Tufail the ruler of the tribe, given him by the Holy Prophet, and while he was presenting it to him he was so forcibly speared from the back that the spear came out through his chest. "By the Lord of the Holy Kaaba", he cried out, "I have obtained my heart's desire," (martyrdom) and fell. This short sentence so worked upon the assassin's mind that he at once betook himself to the Holy Prophet and embraced Islam.

In the fourth year A. H. the Holy Qoran prohibited the use of wine by the Muslims. A proclamation was made through out the city. Those that were drinking it at the time at once doffed their cups and broke their bottles, Casks, leather bottles, and earthen jars containing wine were all brought out into the streets, and the contents emptied on the ground, so that literally the streets overflowed with wine. We cannot sufficiently appraise the importance of this wise prohibition. Wine is called amongst the Muslims by the name of "Umm ul khubayis" or the "Mother of all Evil". It not only ruins a man's health and prosperity and his social status but also makes an ass of him, sometimes a devil. Its evil effects need not be dilated upon here at length as they are too well known to all. It is urged by some that the use of wine in moderation is non-injurious, nay even beneficial. This is a grievous error. It is a deadly poison as all medical men will testify. The much of it and the little of it are equally pernicious. Besides it is a fire-water, which instead of quenching the thirst, increases it greatly, the more one drinks of it, still more of it one will want. All drunkards

The use of Wine
prohibited to
Muslims

commenced only with a little at first, and so frail is human nature, that once a habit of it is formed, there is no hope of getting rid of it. It frequently leads to dissipation, debauchery and even murder. Under its influence a person hesitates not to commit actions and crimes which he would not have done otherwise, for at the time he is not a human being at all, rather a beast, or a demon. In fact it is a great curse, and Islam has therefore strictly prohibited its use. It is considered so unclean that if a drop of it were to soil a muslim's clothes he could not offer his Namaz with those clothes on, until he washes them. There is no denying the fact that the purifying religion of Islam had done more towards the temperance cause than all the anti-drink societies and state regulations in the world. In orthodox Muslim countries a drunken man is never seen, but here in India it is to be regretted that the drink evil is rather on the increase. It is gradually becoming a fashion amongst the "Educated" youngsters to treat their visiting friends with whisky and soda in imitation of the European races, and this is considered a mark of civilization and good society manners. Alas! alas! for the pitiable ignorance and perverted intellect of such misguided men! What Allah has prohibited and made punishable with stripes is considered a sign of refinement. Beware therefore of this evil, ye who call yourselves Muslims. Be Muslims in deed and not only in name.

It happened about this time that Thamama, the ruler of Nejd fell into the hands of a detachment of Muslim cavalry. He was brought to Medina and detained in the mosque. The Holy Prophet observing asked him how he fared, and how he should be dealt with. He replied "I am faring well. If you pass sentence of death on me you will justly punish a murderer as retribution for his crime. If you deal mircifully with me you will make me grateful. If money (ransom) be required I pray I may be informed how much is wanted." He was detained for three days and thrice questioned. On every occasion he made the same reply. The Holy Prophet

Thamama the
ruler of Nejd
captured his
plea before the
Holy Prophet

ordered his unconditional release and set him at liberty. He went and washing himself clean came back, and begged to be taken into the fold of Islam. After becoming a Muslim and receiving necessary religious instruction, he went back to his native province, and sent word to the Qoreish that thence forward he would not allow a handful of grain to pass from his territory to them, as they were at war with the Holy Prophet and actually prohibited the export of grain to Mecca. Now Nejd was the granary of Mecca and when the supply of grain was stopped, the Qoreish were in a dire strait. They could not bear starvation and sent word to the Holy Prophet that the Meccans his own kinsfolk and their children were dying of starvation, and besought him to raise the interdict on the exportation of grain from Nejd to Mecca. The Prophet of Mercy who was unaware of this circumstance at once issued orders to Thamama to allow the supply of grain to Mecca as usual.

In the sixth year of the Hijra the Holy Prophet had a dream in which he saw that he and his companions were performing their Hajj at Mecca. He mentioned the dream to the Muslims. The Mohajereens who had been obliged to leave Mecca their beloved native town with extreme regret upon hearing this happy dream were overjoyed at the prospect of once more beholding it, and constantly importuned the Holy Prophet to take them thither. Finally they prevailed upon him to undertake the journey in the month of Zee Qhaad a sacred month according to the old practice of the Arabs wherein every one was free to visit Mecca, and no warfare was made. About fourteen hundred followers accompanied the Holy Prophet. They took no implements of war with them, on the other hand they took camels and goats decorated for sacrifice in the usual manner. When they reached Hodiebiya about nine miles from Mecca the Holy Prophet camped there, and sent word to the Qoreish announcing to them his intention of visiting Mecca and performing the Hajj, and asking their permission therefor. Hazrath Othman, the

The Truce of
Hodiebiya

future third Caliph was the bearer of the news. Some-time after his departure a rumour reached the Muslims that the Qoreish had either killed or imprisoned him. The Holy Prophet then called together all his followers and took a fresh oath of allegiance from them to the effect that if the rumour proved true and warfare became necessary to avenge the alleged death of Hazrath Othman they would all stand together with the Holy Prophet. Though the Muslims were quite unprepared for war, nor had they any other intention but that of departing peacefully after performing the Hajj, they all took this second oath or allegiance cheerfully and readily. The Qoreish got intelligence of this renovation of allegiance and were alarmed. They sent several chiefs one after another to see how the land lay. One of them Orua bin Mas'ud returning to Mecca told the Qoreish how fondly the Muslims were attached to the Holy Prophet and in what veneration they held him. "I have had occasion," said he, "frequently to visit the courts of Nagasi, the King of Abyssinia, of Khaizer of Rome, and Khusrou of Persia but I never saw such respect paid to any one of them as is paid to Muhammad (peace and blessings on him). His presence is so commanding that none of his followers dare look up into his face. Whenever he opens his lips to speak, all bow down their heads and listen attentively. If he washes his hands and feet, Muslims crowd together jostling one another and catch the dropping water in their hands and bathe their faces with it, not allowing a drop to fall to the ground. I therefore strongly advise you to make peace with him, on any terms he likes." After some negotiations a truce was concluded on the following terms —

- (1) There shall be no war for a period of ten years between the Qoreish and the Muslims, nor any restriction placed on the free egress and ingress by both parties from or into their respective territories free intercourse being allowed between them

- (2) The different clans living near Mecca shall be at liberty to join either party at their discretion and after joining shall be treated as identical with the party they joined
- (3) The Muslims shall be at liberty to perform the Lesser Pilgrimage at Mecca the next year they shall not bear any arms on their persons when entering Mecca though they may be armed during the journey
- (4) Should any Meccan embrace Islam and go over to the Holy Prophet he shall be handed back to the Qoreish, but the latter shall not be bound to hand back any Muslim who may come over to them

Some of the Muslims were dis-satisfied with this last stipulation as derogatory to Islam, but seeing that the Holy Prophet had consented to it, dared not give vent to their feeling. While the treaty was drafted and not yet ratified by the addition of signatures Hazrath Abu Jandal son of the Qoreish Commissioner for the treaty who had already embraced Islam and had been kept in chains by the Qoreish came running with his chains and wished to remain with the Muslims. The father demanded his son back, according to the terms of the treaty. The Holy Prophet replied that the terms of the treaty would come into force only after it was ratified by signatures of both parties. "In that case", said the Commissioner, "we will make no treaty at all". Then the Holy Prophet said to the captive "Be patient and Allah will devise some means for your liberty, as we have verbally consented to the treaty we are bound to hand you back to the Qoreish". So he was handed over to his father. He was carried back in chains and consigned to a prison. There he preached Islam to his guards and made converts of them, so that in a year some three hundred men were converted to Islam at Mecca.

The peculiar
case of Hazrath
Abu Jandal a
captive Muslim
at Mecca

The Qoreish then regretted their folly in making the last stipulation and sent some of their chiefs to the Holy Prophet praying him to rescind the last article of the treaty but he refused to do so. The Holy Prophet together with his followers performed the Lesser Pilgrimage at Hodeibiya offering up their sacrifices. The chapter of the Holy Qoran entitled "The Victory" was revealed at this place which deals with the victory granted to the Muslims. Some of those who had been dissatisfied with the treaty asked the Holy Prophet, whether going back to Medina without performing the intended Hajj at the Kaaba was a victory, but he only smiled and said "Indeed it is a victory as you will see by and by". The great advantage gained by the Muslims by the treaty was that Muslim preachers had free ingress into Mecca and preached Islam so successfully that in one year more converts were made than in all the previous years together. The companions of the Holy Prophet then discerned the deep wisdom and long foresight of their great master in making the treaty as proposed by the Qoreish.

As per article three of the treaty Muslims had a right to visit Mecca and perform the Lesser Pilgrimage there the next year. Accordingly the Holy Prophet accompanied by two thousand Muslims went up to Mecca and performed it. The Meccans looked up their houses and betook themselves to the adjacent hills and from there watched the peaceful and orderly manner in which the Muslims conducted themselves, their non-interference with the property, though previously their own, but now in the possession of the Qoreish by usurpation, their sincere and devout worship of Allah, their solemn sacrifices, their cleanliness and their perfect discipline that reigned amongst them and all these things made a deep impression on their minds in favour of Islam. The Muslims remained for three days at Mecca and then retired. The sober and punctilious behaviour of the Muslims at Mecca induced Hazrath Khalid bin Waleed, the mighty hero of Islam and Amr bin Aus the future conqueror of Egypt and several others to embrace Islam of their own free will.

CHAPTER X

At the time when the truce was made as per article two of the agreement, the tribe of Benu Khuzaa sided with the Muslims and that of Benu Bekr with the Qoreish. Scarcely had two years elapsed since the truce when the Qoreish wantonly broke it. It appears that there

A wanton breach
of the truce by
the Qoreish

had been long standing enmity betwixt these two tribes and in consequence the Benu Bekr openly aided by the Qoreish fell upon the Benu Khuzaa unawares and almost exterminated the tribe though they begged for mercy and took shelter in the Holy Kaaba. Some of the Commissioners who had signed the treaty were personally fighting in aid of their allies. About forty men of the survivors at once ran up to the Holy Prophet at Medina and in his presence sang out in a doleful tune the tragic details of how their tribe had been butchered in cold blood, though they took sanctuary at the Holy Kaaba. The Holy Prophet comforted them and administered to their needs as far as it was possible. But he took this wanton breach of the truce by the Qoreish as a personal affront and resolved to punish them as they well deserved. He collected an army ten thousand strong and making rapid marches arrived at Mecca and encamping around it ordered a large number

The conquest
of Mecca

of fires to be lighted in the camp. The Qoreish then understood that the punishment for their treachery and wilful breach of the truce was at hand. They were seriously alarmed, as they well might be, but they were not in a position to make any resistance. Abu Sufyan the principal chief of Mecca and leader of the Qoreish army against the Muslims on several occasions, and their bitterest foe, seeing that there was no way of escape left to him and fighting being quite out of question, presented himself before the Holy Prophet as an abject suppliant and embracing Islam tendered sincere apologies for his past mis-deeds and sued for mercy. The Holy Prophet ever prone to mercy towards his foes then issued the following directions to his army, which he divided into several detachments with orders to enter into the

city by different routes The other orders referred to above are given below They prove the noble clemency and forgiving nature he possessed

The element
orders of the
Holy Prophet at
the capture of
Mecca

- (1) No Meccan who lays down his arms should be killed
- (2) He who takes sanctuary in the Holy Kaaba should not be molested
- (3) Those who shut up themselves in their houses should not be killed
- (4) Those who seek shelter in the house of Abu Sufyan should not be killed
- (5) Those also should be spared who take refuge in the house of Hakim bin Hizam, the nephew of the late Hazrath Bibi Khadijah, the first wife of the Holy Prophet
- (6) No fleeer should be killed or pursued
- (7) No wounded person should be killed
- (1) No prisoner should be killed

Was there ever a more merciful general in history ? All the columns of the Muslim Army entered the city unopposed and quietly took possession, only the one under Hazrath Khaled bin Waleed encountered a skirmish in which twenty eight Meccans and two muslims fell, but this was due to a mis conception When the city thus surrendered the Holy Prophet entered it riding a camel with bent head reciting the forty eighth chapter of the Holy Qoran entitled "Victory", a boy the son of his freedman Hazrath Zaid sitting behind him When he entered the precincts of the Holy Kaaba he dislodged the three hundred and sixty idols that were kept around it pushing them down one by one with the end of a cross bow he had in his hand, reciting the verse of the Qoran 'And say truth has come

The idols around
the Holy Kaaba
thrown down

and falsehood vanished surely falsehood is a vanishing thing" Qoran 17 81. Some idols that were too high to be reached he made Hazrath Ali get up over his shoulders and throw down. When the work was accomplished the Holy Prophet sent for Othman bin Abi lalha whose family had been the keepers of the key of the Holy Kaaba for ages. Some years back at the commencement of his

The keeper of
the Holy Kaaba
reminded of a
previous pro-
phesy

mission the Holy Prophet had asked this Othman to open the door of the Kaaba for him, and he had refused. "Keep in mind", the Holy Prophet had said, "a day will come when I will take the key from you and give it to whomsoever I might choose"

"Would then all the chiefs and men of the Qoreish be dead or debased on that day that they would allow such a thing to occur?" "No, they would all be alive and even more exalted than to day." The dialogue then recurred to Othman and he tremblingly fetched the key and handed it over. The Holy Prophet opened the door, went in, and cried out, "Allah o-Akber", "God is Great", in every corner of the building, and finally offered a short and sincere prayer of thanksgiving to Allah, laying down his forehead

Restoration of
the key to the
keeper

on the ground expressing his entire submission and deep humility. After the prayer when he came out Hazrath Abbas his uncle suggested that the key might be given to

the Benu Hashim. "No", replied the Holy Prophet, "this day is the day of conferring benefices and largesses" and so saying he handed it back to Othman, telling him that he who would take the key away from him would be an usurper.

Now appeared with downcast eyes and abject countenances all the haughty chiefs of the proud tribe of Qoreish trembling for their lives. "How do you

A general am-
nesty granted by
the Holy Pro-
phet

think O people of the Qoreish", asked the Holy Prophet addressing them, "I should act towards you now?" "With kindness

and pity gracious brother and nephew forgiving our faults and pitying our helpless condition" replied they with one

voice The Holy Prophet on hearing this shed tears, and nobly said "Yes, I will not reproach you to day, God pardon you! Verily He is the most Merciful of the merciful, I freely forgive you, you are all free"

On the conquest of Mecca a Christian biographer writes thus, "Now was time for the prophet to show his blood thirsty nature His old persecutors are at his feet Will he not trample on them, torture them, revenge himself after his own cruel manner? Now the man will come forward in his true colours we may prepare our horror and cry shame before hand But what is this? Is there no blood in the streets? Where are the bodies of the thousands that have been butchered? Facts are hard things, and it is a fact that the day of Muhammad's greatest triumph over his enemies was also the day of his grandest victory over himself He freely forgave the Qoreish all the years of sorrow and cruel scorn they had inflicted on him he gave an amnesty to the whole population of Mecca * * * * The army followed his example and entered quietly and peaceably No house was robbed, no woman was insulted, * * * * It was thus that Muhammad entered his native city again Through all the annals of conquest, there is no triumphant entry like unto this one"—Lane-Poole—As stated by this historian the entry and subsequent behaviour of the victors is certainly unique in the history of the world It should be remembered that the Qoreish had persecuted the Holy Prophet for twenty one long years There was no manner of injury which they did not inflict on him He was insulted and ridiculed at every turn He was deprived of his right of citizenship and together with his tribe had been immured in a ravine for three long years Many of his kinsmen, followers and friends had been slain in various inhuman ways and he himself was obliged to banish himself for ever from his beloved native city to save his life, and all this simply because he preached the Unity of God To pardon such bitter and inveterate enemies without a word of censure such magnanimity can

A Christian biographer's account of the conquest

be shown only by a prophet of God, whose ordinary vices of human nature were entirely eradicated. No other person could have had such perfect control over his passions.

A few particular instances may be specially mentioned here of the Holy Prophet's clemency. Ikrama son of Abu

A few specific instances of the Holy Prophet's mercy

Jehl had not only fought against him several times but was also the chief instigator and breaker of the ten years' truce by almost annihilating the tribe of the Benu

Khuzaa, allies of the Muslims. On the Holy Prophet's entry into Mecca he threw himself on a fleet horse and fled towards the sea to embark for Yemen, leaving behind a young and beautiful wife whom he had very recently married. The bride however appeared before the Holy Prophet and embracing Islam besought him to forgive her truant husband, which he at once did. She then hastened to overtake her husband and advising him of his pardon brought him back to his presence. Ikrama became a Muslim and the merciful Prophet appointed him commander of a battalion and bestowed liberal donations on the young couple. Abdulla bin Sarrah had been appointed by the Holy Prophet a scribe to write down revealed messages. Being a young man of rather mischievous waggishness, began to pervert the words and to give out to the people that it was himself who received the revelation and the Holy Prophet learnt it from him. On his mischief being discovered he had fled and relapsed into idolatry. He now appeared and begged for mercy and was pardoned. Habbar had struck Zainab the Holy Prophet's daughter with his spear while she was travelling on a camel and thrown her down, she being quick with child an abortion occurred which eventually brought on her death. This homicide now appeared and begged for mercy. The Holy Prophet pardoned him too. Wahshi, the Ethiopian slave who had treacherously killed Hazrath Hazma, the Holy Prophet's uncle, had first fled from Mecca on the Muslims' entry into it but taking heart at the general amnesty granted to offenders, presented himself before the Holy Prophet and was pardoned.

Hinda, the wife of Abu Sufyan who had incited the enemies of the Holy Prophet against him at the battle of Ohad and had gnawed the heart and liver of Hazrath Hamza disguised herself, and mixing with other females appeared before the Holy Prophet to take the oath of allegiance, hoping to escape un noticed, but was however recognised by him. She at once fell at his feet and cried out "O Prophet of Allah, mercy! mercy!" and mercy was shown to her. There are many more such instances but those mentioned here are quite enough to show that rancour found no place in the Holy Prophet's bosom

He then addressed a few words collectively to his enemies, the Qoreish "O people of the Qoreish" said he, "you see that Allah has brought you down from your foolish pride of pedigree and superiority over others. Understand that all men are descendants of Adam and Allah made Adam from dust. The different clans and tribes are for purposes of identification only. No one class is superior to another. With Allah, those only are superior who excel most in piety. You may now depart in peace as you are all free and forgiven"

The Holy Prophet's address to the Qoreish

A crier called out from the top of the Kaaba inviting all the Muslims for the afternoon prayer, and after the prayer was over the Holy Prophet took his station on the hillock of Safa and the people of Mecca passed before him, men and women, taking the oath of allegiance acknowledging him as the prophet of God, and binding themselves to the following conditions —

The oath of allegiance taken by the Meccans

- (1) To believe in the One True God Allah, the Creator of the Universe, the Sole Lord of All things, to worship and seek assistance from Him alone, and to make no associate with Him

- (2) Not to commit theft, adultery, murder, not to bury female infants alive, and not to cast any false imputations against any one
- (3) To obey the Prophet of God to the best of their ability in all just and lawful matters

In the case of females another condition was added viz ,

- (4) Not to make any loud lamentations on any one's death, nor to tear their clothes and go and sit at the grave of departed in mourning

It will be seen that the terms of the oath are identical with those made at the time when the Medinites had made their allegiance in the dark before the Holy Prophet went over to their city. No change was made in the oath with change of circumstances

The males who took the oath, were grasped by the hand by the Holy Prophet, but in the case of females he did not allow their hands to come in contact with his own hand. A vessel full of water was kept and the Holy Prophet dipped his hand into it and withdrew then the females one after another dipped theirs and took the oath. This was considered tantamount to grasping by the hand

Mode of taking
the oath

A certain Meccan while advancing to take his oath, was so over awed by the majestic countenance of the Holy Prophet that his body began to shake and tremble. The Prophet observing this said "Of what are you afraid, my man, I am no king, nor am I a grandee, but only the son of a

The Prophet's
humility

poor woman who lived on camel's flesh died in the Sun !
 Whilst at the zenith of his power, with all the chiefs of Mecca trembling before him, he had no idea of self-aggrandisement but continued the same simple unostentatious individual as he was before his mission. God's ever lasting Peace and Blessings be upon him, his posterity and his followers ! Amen !

When the Medinites and other allies, who had helped him in his campaigns and had promised themselves vengeance on the Meccans and perhaps had secret hopes of plunder, saw the great lenity displayed by the Holy Prophet, whispered amongst themselves that the Meccans did not deserve so much kindness at his hands, the Holy Prophet hearing this recited the following verses from the Holy Qorian

His forgiving nature and his consistency

‘ Turn aside evil with what is better ’—Qoran 23 96
 ‘ And who speaks better than he who calls (men) to God, and does good and then says verily I am a Muslim ? Good and evil are not like Turn aside (evil) with what is better, and lo ! between whom and thyself was enmity, shall become as it were (thy) warmest friend’—(Ibid 41 33-34)

“Say to those who believe, that they pardon those who fear not the punishment of God” (Ibid 45 14) ‘ And hasten emulously for pardon from your Lord, and Paradise whose breadth is (as) the Heaven and the Earth, prepared for the pious, who are charitable in prosperity and adversity and suppress (their) rage, and forgive men, for God loves those who do good’—Ibid 3 133-134

When he sat on the hill Safa, gazing down wistfully upon the conquered city of Mecca, his beloved birth place and the scene of his early struggles, the Ansars became anxious lest he should settle down there and forsake Medina. The Holy Prophet heard their talk, and turning towards them said ‘ “No by Allah ! when you swore

allegiance to me, I gave you my word to live with you, and die amongst you I should not be acting as a servant of God, nor as His Apostle, if I were to leave you now " Accordingly he went back with them to occupy his lowly huts at Medina in the society of Ansars far from his native place

Some of the Meccans who had migrated to Medina on account of the persecutions of the Qoreish now desired that their houses and plantations which had been usurped during their absence might be restored to them, as Mecca had been conquered But the Holy Prophet refused to do so, observing that what was left in no circumstances be resumed

The next day after the conquest of Mecca the Holy Prophet was making the circuit of the Holy Kaaba One The conversion
of Fazala Fazala who was also there thought it a good opportunity to kill him, as he was alone and unarmed With this evil intent he proceeded towards him But the Holy Prophet called out "Is Fazalla coming?" "Yes", he replied and drew near "What were you thinking of just now?" "Nothing, I was only saying "Allah"! "Allah" At this reply the Holy Prophet laughed and bade him go and beg pardon of Allah for meditating to kill His messenger, so saying the Holy Prophet laid his palm on his breast Fazala says that in consequence of this, "My heart was changed on the spot, and nothing was dearer to me than the Holy Prophet thenceforth" On his way homeward his concubine called out to him to hear a word from her, but his only reply was, that Allah and Islam forbade him from approaching her any more

After the conquest of Mecca Islam began to spread very fast throughout the peninsula There were several The rapid spread
of Islam throug
out Arabia, and
its causes causes for it Of these the chief was that there was a tradition and a firm belief amongst Arabs that no one could capture Kaaba but with the permission of Allah When the Holy Prophet captured it, people were convin-

ced that he was a prophet of Allah indeed, and the religion he preached was true. There were alive hundreds of people who had witnessed the utter destruction of the army that had come to demolish the House of God. In

Abraha the Vice
roy of Yemen
attempts to de-
molish the Holy
Kaaba

the year of the prophet's birth Abraha, the Christian viceroy at Yemen of the King of Abyssinia, had attacked Mecca with an army of sixty thousand men who had also elephants with them. His object was the demolition of the Kaaba. He had built a

magnificent cathedral at Sanaa in his country with the hope of diverting Arab trade and religious zeal towards it, from the Kaaba at Mecca. But nothing happening as he expected, he made up his mind to demolish it. When this large army appeared, the poor Arabs were not at all able to cope with it, and decided to flee to the neighbouring hills for safety. Abd-e Munaf the guardian in charge of the Kaaba stood up at its door and prayed aloud, "O Lord! Thy servants are not able to fight this huge army, and therefore pray Thee to take care of Thine Own and not permit the enemy to triumph!" and left. The army encamped close by and finding the town vacated their commander was considering what to do next. Abd-

Talk between
Abraha and
Abd e Manaf

e Manaf then went to meet him. Abraha received him politely, and making him sit down by his side, asked him what he had come for. Manaf complained that his cattle

had been seized by the men of his army and begged they might be restored. "Is this all your request? From your noble and majestic countenance I felt great respect for you on your arrival but it has all vanished." "Why?" "Because you know I have come to destroy your place of worship. You speak not a word about it, you obviously set greater value on your cattle than on it." "No I do not prize my cattle above Kaaba the cattle are my property and I am their owner but the Kaaba is not my property, its owner is quite able to take care of His property, hence my asking you for my cattle." Before an attack was actually made a virulent type of plague burst forth in the camp which entirely swept away the vast horde,

and their bodies lay rotting in the adjacent valley, a prey for the carnivorous birds. The Arabs were confirmed in their belief that no one could ever capture Kaaba unless aided by Allah. When Hazrath Muhammad (peace and blessings on him!) seized it and threw down the idols around it they believed that Allah was with him.

Another reason was that the Qoreish having been the most powerful of all the clans, many other had become their allies for all time, and they were loathe to break their alliance and go over to the Holy Prophet as long as the Qoreish continued in power, now that their prowess was gone they had nothing to fear. The third and perhaps the most effective cause was the open preaching freely carried on through the country unopposed, and the simple and beautiful truths of Islam appealed to all those that heard them.

CHAPTER XI

There were no complex dogmas above human comprehension in it. To believe in one Allah Who is All Knowing, All Powerful, and Merciful beyond measure to His creatures, to worship Him alone, to believe in the mission of the Holy Prophet, to avoid all manner of sin and do good to others, even to the dumb animals, as far as it lies in one's power to keep one's animal passions in check, by constant prayer and occasional fasting, to give away to the poor a certain fixed proportion of one's income, to abstain from murder, drink, gambling and prostitution and to be obedient to one's parents, to be kind to one's relations and neighbours, these are the chief teachings of Islam. It also teaches that a virtuous and pious life in this world entitles one to a place in the Garden of Allah wherein is centred all manner of conceivable bliss, the chief of them being the gazing on the face (light) of the Creator. Sinners and evil doers will be sent to Hell to be purged of their evils with fire. Every one is held responsible for his own actions, no shifting of one's burden to the

Tenets of Islam
in brief their
simplicity and
rationality

shoulders of another, nor punishing the innocent for the guilty Allah will deal justly but also with mercy and beneficence Thus if He punishes any creature for evil done by him the punishment

Allah's justice
and mercy dis-
cussed

will be strictly proportionate to the offence, which is justice, and if He should be pleased

to forgive a sinner without any punishment, that will be His mercy, for Allah is the Supreme Lord of the Universe, it being His own creation He is free to act as He pleases not being accountable to any one for His doings No one dare question Him, why He did this and why He did that But at the same time He is just as well as merciful

When a petty mortal, a governor of a province, has the prerogative and power to pardon a condemned culprit, is it conceivable that the Lord Almighty cannot have that power? Nor does the blessed

Justice and mer-
cy not incom-
patible

quality of mercy clash with justice, the two things are not antagonistic but quite compatible with each other Our Hindu and

Christian friends seem to labour under some misconception in this matter They hold it will be unjust to forgive a sinner without punishing him, and to support this erroneous position the Hindus have had to resort to the theory of transmigration of souls A man is born as a Brahmin in

The Theory of
Transmigration
of Souls

his next life if he leads virtuous life in the present, as a Sudra, or as a donkey, a dog, or a worm, if he leads a sinful life The Christian belief is that all men being sinful,

and God wishing to avoid injustice by letting go sinners unpunished, sent his Beloved Only Son, and made him suffer death on the cross to expiate the sins of the sinners and thus was justice satisfied To a Muslim mind both these theories seem to be untenable First considering the Hindu theory a muslim exclaims as no human being has the least recollection of what he did in his previous life how can he avoid repeating the sins he had committed then? Secondly what proof is there that we really had a previous existence at all, except imagination or conjecture? In a matter of such vital importance as religion mere guess work is of no avail Supposing that a person

denies having had a previous life, how would our Hindu friends convince him to the contrary? What proof can they bring forward to rebutt his denial. There are many more unanswerable objections against this theory of transmigration which it is not necessary for us to discuss here in detail. Suffice it to say that no Muslim can accept it as God's truth

As regards the Christian theory of salvation it is equally unsatisfactory to a seeker after truth. For to avoid the injustice of forgiving the guilty

The Christian
theory of expia-
tion of sin by
the blood of
Christ

God is made to punish an innocent person. "Is not this a worse piece of injustice" cries out a Muslim, 'why should the innocent son suffer in place of the guilty sinners?' Would any judge in this world

accept a substitute for a condemned criminal and execute him instead? How then can Allah the Supreme Judge sanction what a temporal judge would refuse as revolting to reason?" The fact is that the qualities of justice and Mercy are mis understood. It must be borne in mind that Allah is the Sole Creator and Absolute owner of everything in the world, and as such He is not bound by any rule but is perfectly justified in doing what He pleases with His own. No one dare question him. But in as much as He has graciously promised to administer justice amongst His creatures He will never act contrary to His gracious promise. Now what is sin which deserves punishment? It is disobeying His commandments. If He should punish a sinner it is justice but if he should forgive him, it is His mercy. It would be against justice as conceived by men if He were to punish one who has committed no sin, but you cannot say that it is unjust to forgive a sinner. Suppose you are a creditor and several debtors owe you different sums of money. You enquire into their several circumstances and collect the whole amount of debt from some of them, only a half from some, a one-fourth from some others whilst you collect nothing at all from a few and cancel their debts. Can any one call you *unjust* for doing so? You enquired into each

case and considering the different circumstances in each dealt with your debtors according as their circumstances required. The debt being your sole property you were at perfect liberty to do with it as you pleased. You are not bound to treat all your debtors alike, because their circumstances differ. It would be unjust on your part to take from any debtor more than what you are rightly entitled to, but it is not *injustice* if you left off your dues in some cases. It is *mercy* and not *injustice*. Similarly Allah who is the best judge, and whose debtors all mankind are, will judge on the last great day, each case according to its deserts just as He pleases. Even on earth in the law courts an act is judged according to the circumstances in which it was done. A kills B.

Actions become
sinful only con-
ditionally

If the killing was wilful and done out of spite with intent to cause the death of B, A is guilty of murder, and liable to the extreme penalty of the law. But if A with no intent to cause death intending only to cause simple hurt struck B, and B died it is only man slaughter, and A is no murderer, nor liable to the extreme penalty. Again suppose that B attacked A, and the latter in self defence struck B, and B died, A is guilty of no offence. Or suppose B is a proclaimed out law and A kills him, knowing him to be such, A being far from guilty of any offence may claim a reward from the government, the price set on the head of the out law. The act of killing is identical in all these cases. But the circumstances under which it was done materially alter its nature. You cannot call a judge *unjust* because he did not pass a sentence of death in all these cases alike, on the ground that killing is punishable by death. Or to take another example. Suppose half a dozen beggars ask charity of you. You give a rupee to one, half a rupee to another, a few coppers to others, and to some you give nothing. You dispense your charity according to the needs of each beggar, and you refuse your charity altogether, to those who are able-bodied, but lazy fellows, and would spend what you give them, at the nearest tavern. You cannot be called unjust because you did not give them alms alike, the money being yours, you are quite at liberty

to give it to others as you think fit, not as the on lookers think The quality of mercy being an exclusive attribute of Allah, He may dispense it amongst His creatures as He thinks fit, not as you would have Him do Nay it is inconceivable humanly speaking that the same amount of punishment be inflicted on all offenders for the same offence, or the same amount of mercy be shown to all asking for it, because all men are not alike, nor are their circumstances all alike This is exactly what Islam teaches Allah the Just and the Merciful, will judge each individual according to his circumstances and dispense His mercy as He should please If He punishes it is His justice, if He forgives it is His mercy This tenet of Islam is such that reason concurs in, and common sense approves of

But to return to the story The simple and true tenets of Islam attracted thousands when they were freely preached Two powerful clans, the Hawazin, and the Thakeef lived near Mecca Their territory adjoined it When Mecca was subdued by Holy Prophet they thought that if they should attack and overcome the Muslims at this juncture all the lands and plantations of the Meccans would be theirs With this idea they made an alliance with the Benu Muzair and Benu Hilal, and collecting an army of four thousand warriors advanced and encamped in the valley of Honein The Holy Prophet learning this wished to avoid blood shed in the neighbourhood of the Kaaba, and proceeded towards their camp Now, some two thousand young Arabs, raw and illequipped had joined the Muslim Army, and these were the fore most in the advance The enemy had posted a party of skilful archers at a narrow and difficult pass and when these raw recruits advanced they let fly a shower of arrows which discomfited them, and they had nothing for it but to run away in all directions The Holy Prophet observing this, dismounted, and his uncle Hazrath Abbas called aloud the regular army to advance They soon came up and attacking the enemy put them to flight They retired in two sections The

The battle of
Honein

one composed of all fighting men with Malik bin Auf their chief, took refuge in the fort of Tayef, and the other composed of non combatants, women and children, with all their property, cattle, camels, and treasure betook themselves to the hill of Antas for safety. The fort of Tayef was besieged and a detachment under Abu Amer was sent in pursuit of the second section. He soon seized it together with all the women, the children and a large amount of booty. When the kind hearted Holy Prophet was told of this he ordered the siege to be raised as the calamity of losing their families and their property was quite enough for them. The Holy Prophet with his army encamped in the same valley. Later on six chiefs of Hawazan appeared before him and sued for mercy. These were the men who had hooted him and stoned him till he fell down senseless and bathed in blood and had driven him out of their town when in early days of his mission he had gone there to preach. Mark the treatment which he gave to them when they appeared before him as suppliants for his mercy. "You have done well in coming to me, in fact, I was waiting for you and for this reason I have not distributed the prisoners though two weeks have elapsed. I can gladly give up my share and that of my kinsmen and had there been only the Mohajireens and the Ansars with me, I would have given up their shares also, but you see, that there are in the army new men who have not yet adopted Islam, and they may not like to give up their portion. I therefore suggest that you appear again tomorrow after the morning prayer and renew your request before the whole assembly, and I will do what I can for you" was the noble reply of the Prophet. When they appeared the next morning and pleaded for mercy the Holy Prophet, (peace and blessings on him!) at once said, 'I give up my share and that of all the children of Abdul Muttalib'. When he said so all the Mohajers and Ansars gave up their shares also but there were some new men, who did not like to give up their prisoners without compensation. The Holy Prophet sent for them and fixing the value of each prisoner at six camels paid the value

The Holy Prophet sets free six thousand prisoners

himself and set the prisoners free. Then he distributed new clothes amongst them all, at his own cost and sent them away. Their number amounted to six thousand.

Among the prisoners the Holy Prophet discovered Sheema, a daughter of his old nurse Halima who had suckled him in his infancy. When he saw her he spread out his cloth for her to sit upon and spoke to her with great affection and tenderness, calling her his sister and offered to her the option to stay with him as his sister or go back with her people. She chose to go and was sent away loaded with wealth and presents. Thus ended the conquest of Mecca and the Holy Prophet returned to Medina with his followers and took up his permanent abode.

An old acquaintance amongst them

CHAPTER XII

THE HOLY PROPHET AFTER THE CONQUEST OF MECCA

The Holy Prophet distributed the booty obtained at Honein, then and there. He made liberal donations to the new Muslims at Mecca, who were as yet lukewarm in their new faith, to gain them over to Islam, and stimulate their zeal, so much so that some of them cried out, "None but a prophet of Allah can give away wealth so freely." To his attached and tried Ansars he said, "Let these people carry with them camels and goats, you carry home the prophet of Allah with you." These kind words so gladdened their hearts that these veterans wept tears of joy at their good fortune. They all came back to Medina happy and victorious.

In proportion as the true faith of Islam spread the duties of the Holy Prophet also increased. The two most important cities, viz., Mecca and Medina were under his direct control, and a new republic was rising up with the Holy Prophet at its head. In addition to his duties as the spiritual guide and tutor, to the ever increasing number of

Muslims, the duty of guarding the infant republic and consolidating the several clans and tribes of Arabs who had been fighting with one another for centuries fell upon him. But the Holy Prophet was equal to the task. Under the direction of Allah he managed the things admirably.

We have seen that there were several tribes of the Jews in Medina. The Holy Prophet had concluded a treaty of peace and alliance with them all. The Treachery of the Jews But they all broke the treaty shamefully and treacherously. There were three tribes of them: the Beni Quainuqua, the Beni Nazir, and the Beni Khuzeiza. The Jews as a class were a haughty hypocritical and mischief-loving people. Such a kind-hearted prophet as Christ (peace on him!) had called them 'Vipers and sons of vipers', and had plainly foretold that "The Kingdom of Heaven would be taken from them and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder" — St. Matt 21: 43-44.

During the absence of the Holy Prophet and the Muslims at Beder a Muslim woman went into the quarters of the Beni Quainuqua to sell milk. Some An indecent assault by a Jew on an Arab milk woman ruffian made an indecent assault upon her and stripped her naked. Attracted by her cries a Muslim rushed and killed the Jew, several Jews came up and killed the Muslim, and a riot took place. The Holy Prophet was duly informed of all this on his return. He sent for the Jews to appear and explain matters. The Jews not only failed to appear but sent him back the agreement paper with defiant words.

In the fourth year of the Hijra, the Holy Prophet went into the quarters of the Beni Nazir to collect subscriptions for some national work, when he was made to sit near a wall, and the Jews colluded and sent up one of them over the wall to drop a huge stone upon his head,

and make an end of him The Holy Prophet being apprised of this immediately left the quarter Besides this the Jews of all the three clans set their poets to work to lampoon the women of the believers in obscene verse, and such outrages upon common decency, not to say upon the code of Arab honour and chivalry, became a favourite occupation among the poets of the Jewish clans As the treatment meted out to the Jews of Medina has furnished some prejudiced European writers like, Prideaux and others with a handle to attack the Holy Prophet and ascribe blood thirstiness to him, the writer can do nothing better than quote here the version of the whole affair as given by a sober minded Christian biographer, who has studied the subject impartially

Conspiracy amongst the Jews to crush the Holy Prophet under a boulder

“These were offences against the religion and the persons of the Muslims”, says Lane Poole, “they also conspired against the State Muhammad was not only the preacher of Islam, he was also the king of Medina, and was responsible for the safety and peace of the city As a prophet he could afford to ignore the jibes of the Jews though they maddened him to fury, but as the Chief of the City, the general in a time of almost continual warfare, when Medina was kept in a state of military defence and under a sort of military discipline, he could not overlook treachery He was bound by his duty to his subjects to suppress a party that might (and nearly did) lead to the sack of the city by investing armies * * * * * The blood thirstiness consists in this, some half a dozen Jews distinguished themselves by their violence against the Muslims, or by their custom of *carrying information to the common enemy of Medina*, were executed, two of the three Jewish clans were sent into exile, just as they had previously come into exile and the third was exterminated—the men killed and women and children made slaves The execution of the half dozen marked Jews is generally called (by Christian writers) ‘assassinations’ because a Muslim was

A Christian writer on the punishment of the Jews

sent secretly to kill each of the criminals. The reason is almost too obvious to need explanation. There were no police or law courts or even courts martial at Medina. Some one of the followers of Muhammad must therefore be the executor of the sentence of death and it was better it should be done quietly, as the executing of a man openly before his clan would have caused a brawl and more blood shed and retaliation, till the whole city had become mixed up in the quarrel. If secret assassination is the word for such deeds, secret assassination was a necessary part of the internal government of Medina. The men must be killed and best in that way. In saying this I assume that Muhammad was cognizant of the deed, and that *it was not merely a case of private vengeance*, but in several instances the evidence that traces these executions to Muhammad *is either entirely wanting or is too doubtful to claim our credence*.

"Of the sentences upon the three whole clans that of exile passed upon two of them was clement enough. They were a turbulent set always setting the people of Medina by the ears, and finally a brawl followed by an insurrection resulted in the expulsion of one tribe, and insubordination, alliance with enemies and a suspicion of conspiracy against the prophet's life ended similarly for the second. Both tribes had violated the original treaty, and had endeavoured in every way to bring Muhammad and his religion to ridicule and destruction. The only question is *whether their punishment was not too light*. Of the third class a fearful example was made, *not by Muhammad but by an arbiter appointed by themselves*. When the Qoreish and their allies were besieging Medina and had well-nigh stormed the defences, this Jewish tribe entered into negotiations with the enemy, which were only circumvented by the diplomacy of the prophet. When the besiegers had retired, Muhammad naturally demanded an explanation of the Jews, they resisted in their dogged way and were themselves besieged and compelled to surrender at discretion. Muhammad however consented to the appointing of a chief of a tribe allied to the Jews as the judge who

should pronounce sentence upon them. The man in question was a fierce soldier, who had been wounded in the attack on the Jews and indeed died from his wound the same day. This chief gave sentence that the men in number some six hundred (Note by the writer—this number is incorrect, it did not exceed two hundred cf. Syed Amir Ali's "A Critical Examination of the Life and Teachings of Muhammad", page 113, and "A Critical exposition of the popular Jihad" page 91 by M. Cheragh Ali) should be killed and the women and children enslaved and the sentence was carried out * * * * It was a harsh bloody sentence * * * * but it must be remembered that the crime of these men was high treason against the State, during time of siege, and those who have read how Wellington's march could be traced by the bodies of deserters and pillagers hanging from the trees need not be surprised at the summary execution of a traitorous clan." The reader will note that the executions carried out were in strict accordance not only with the Jewish law and customs of war but also with all the laws of all the nations in the world even up to the present day. Death is the invariable penalty for all spies, and traitors and of those guilty of high treason and there were no extenuating circumstances in this case. The sentence, such as it was, not awarded by the Holy Prophet it was one passed by a person of the prisoners' own nomination. When by mutual consent an umpire is appointed to decide on a matter, his finding and verdict both parties are bound to accept. Thus the Holy Prophet had no option but to acquiesce. The sentence though perfectly just and justifiable under all law and usage may perhaps appear harsh to the reader but when the safety of a State composed of several millions is concerned the destruction of a couple of hundred traitors is nothing. When gangrene sets in it becomes necessary to lop off a finger to preserve the whole body. If the traitors instead of nominating an umpire had unreservedly thrown themselves on the Holy Prophet's mercy the utmost punishment he would have inflicted on them would have been banishment from Medina as he did in the case of the other two traitorous clans, but by nominating

an umpire the unfortunate fellows sealed their own fate. When the judge after necessary enquiry pronounced the sentence the Holy Prophet remarked 'Thou hast truly decided like a king'. To his merciful mind it showed the caprice of a despotic monarch and this was a sort of mild rebuke. Nor was the sentence carried out in its entirety. Exercising his prerogative he released two large families with all their belongings and set them free, nor was any woman or child enslaved. They were all let off, some with ransom and others without it. His releasing all the seventy prisoners of Beder without a single execution, the general amnesty he gave to all the inhabitants of Mecca, most of whom were his mortal enemies, the free pardon he gave to over one hundred prisoners captured in the engagement with Benue Mustalikh, after the battle of Beder, his releasing without ransom the eighty men who had attacked the Muslims at Hodiebiya while engaged in Namaz with intent to kill them, but who were all captured, the general release he ordered of the six thousand prisoners, men and women of Honein, paying the ransom of some from his own pocket and furnishing them all with fresh clothing at his own expense, his letting go free the Jewish woman who had poisoned him, his pardoning the slayers of his uncle Hamza and of his daughter Zainab and many other examples of the same nature prove that the milk of human kindness was full in him to overflowing and that his nature was anything but blood thirsty. The Muslims therefore remember him by the appellation "The Prophet of Mercy". Whether such a noble personage can be called a 'blood thirsty tyrant' as some of the prejudiced Christian writers call him because two hundred traitors were put to death who were guilty of high treason and breaking their treaty had supplied arms to the enemy and were fomenting an insurrection within the city acting in collusion with the enemy besieging it from the outside, and the putting to death in pursuance of the sentence pronounced by a judge of their own choice, the judicious reader will himself determine. During the whole of his life the Holy prophet never had a single person put to death on account of his professing a religion other than Islam or for refusing to accept it.

Nor did his four Caliphs do it, nor any of their successors. How unjust and untrue it is to say that Islam was propagated by the sword. All the Muslim kings, conquerors and emperors were staunch followers of the Holy Quran and this Book their invariable guide, their vademecum, contains strict injunctions not to use force to proselytise people.

The relations of the Holy Prophet with the Christians of his time were more amicable. No great wars were carried on with them. Only one battle was fought with the chieftain of Muta, a prince of Syria, to whom a letter had been sent by the Holy Prophet and the chieftain had put the envoy Haziath Hareth bin Umair Azdi to death. The Holy Prophet sent Hazrath Zaid bin Haritha, with three thousand men under him to demand satisfaction. The chief instead of submitting an apology prepared to fight. Heraclius the Emperor was at that time camping with a lakh of troops in the neighbourhood. The chieftain Shorah beel sought aid from him and what with the troops sent by him and what with the clans of the Bedouin Arabs the chief collected an army of one lakh. The Muslim had to fight against this huge army. Hazieth Zaid the commander of the Muslim army fell. He had the banner of Islam in his hand. As being speared through the chest he was falling, Hazreth Jaafer the brother of Hazieth Ali took the banner but he also fell losing both his hands one after another and after receiving ninety wounds in front. Hazreth Abdullah bin Ravaha, an elderly companion of the prophet then took the banner. He also fell. Hazreth Khalid bin Waleed then took charge of the battle, and after thirty-six hours' continued fighting, routed an army forty times greater than his own. In this battle nine swords broke in the hands of Hazreth Khalid one after

Relations with
the Christians

The battle of
Muta

Nine swords
broke in the
hand of Hazreth
Khalid bin
Waleed in thirty
six hours' conti-
nued fighting
and he obtains
the title 'Sword
of God'

another The Holy Prophet bestowed upon him the title of "Sword of God", on this occasion

A caravan returning from Syria brought information that Kaiser or Heraclius was collecting forces to invade Medina to avenge the defeat of his forces by Hazrath Khalid The Holy Prophet considered it advisable to meet him before his arrival at Medina As the enemy was the ruler over an extensive empire the Holy Prophet had to make unusually large preparations A subscription list was opened Hazrath Othman bin Affaan gave nine hundred camels, one hundred horses and one thousand dinars of gold as his contribution Hazieth Abdur Rahman bin Auf paid forty thousand dirhems Hazieth Onar gave exactly one half of his property, Hazrath Abu Bekr gave up all he had and when the Holy Prophet asked him what he had left for his family replied "Allah and the love of His prophet" Hazieth Abu Akhecl Ansari brought two measures of dates He said that having irrigated a field the whole night he got four measures for his wages Leaving a half for his family he had brought the other half as his contribution The Holy Prophet ordered that his dates be sprinkled over all the gold and silver collected there In this manner all Muslims willingly contributed to the general fund and the Holy Prophet left Medina with an army of thirty thousand men Only eighty two men remained behind These with the exception of three were of the class of the hypocrites whom Ubbaïy had assured that Muhammad (peace and blessings on him!) and his followers would not come back as Heraclius would either slay or imprison them But the three who formed the exception were sincere Muslims and lagged behind from indolence hoping to leave in a day or two and by rapid marches over take the army Thus they procrastinated until at last it was too late The army had to encounter many difficulties on the way Riding animals were quite insufficient One camel was allotted to eighteen men to ride by turns It was the height of summer and water was scarce in many

places Provisions fell short and men were obliged to kill camels and sometimes to satisfy their hunger by eating green leaves from the trees At last they reached a place called Tabuk The Holy Prophet encamped there for one whole month in expectation of encountering the enemy, but none appeared It was subsequently discovered that the action of the Holy Prophet in boldly marching with only thirty thousand men to oppose the emperor, Heraclius who could have mustered many lakhs of men, so over awed him that he gave up all idea of invading Arabia, at least for the present The army therefore returned to Medina without fighting

On safe return of the Holy Prophet the hypocrites were non plussed and offered lame excuses for their not joining the army the Holy Prophet took no further notice of the matter but left them to think that their excuses had been accepted

Adventures of
the three default-
ing Muslims

But what befell the three sincere Muslims is worth writing down here as showing what respect was paid by his followers to the Holy Prophet and what a hold he had over them, The statement of one of them Hazrath Kaab bin Malik Ansari one of the earliest Muslims and a famous poet, made in his own words is given below

“My staying away from this journey was due to indolence pure and simple I had no manner of excuse to stay away I had purchased two fast going camels for this particular journey I was well provided with money On the day the army started I had some little work to do and I stayed away saying to myself that I could overtake it the next day So day after day I procrastinated until it was too late for me to start I then grew anxious how to screen myself from the displeasure of the Holy Prophet Several persons suggested various excuses to me but I made up my mind from the first that safety lay in speaking the truth At last when he came back and I went up to meet him he questioned me what had prevented me from accompanying him “O prophet of Allah” I replied “I had everything with me necessary for the jour-

nay but Satan took advantage of my indolence and made me put off starting from time to time. I have no excuse to plead. "Well then stay at home and await orders from Allah such orders as He may be pleased to issue" was the reply. He further ordered all Muslims not to have any intercourse with me and the other two who were in the same plight. I shut myself in my house, only going to the mosque for the customary prayers and sitting in a corner of the mosque in a repentant and sorrowful mood. The Holy Prophet used to throw glances at me askance full of compassion but when I looked up he used to turn away. No one spoke to me nor answered my salutation, life grew irksome and monotonous with me. I had a cousin Abu Khatada by name, and between us the closest friendship existed. He was in his garden. I went up and saluted him thrice, but he gave me no reply. I then addressed him 'Cousin, you very well know that I am an ardent lover of Allah and His prophet and that there is not the least suspicion of hypocrisy and polytheism against me, why then do you not talk to me?' When I repeated my question thrice the only reply he gave to me was "Allah and his prophet know best" and then he turned away. I wept profusely and went home. A letter then came to me from Christian King of Ghassan through a messenger. It said "It has come to our ears that your master has cast you off. Your attainments and your worth do not merit this treatment. Come over to me and you will see with what respect and consideration I will treat you." On reading this my grief increased ten fold, what greater calamity could befall me than that a Christian allures me from the true faith and wants me to become a polytheist? In presence of the messenger I threw the letter into the fire and bade him tell his king that my master's displeasure was far far dearer to me than all the respect and the favour the Christian king could show towards me. With that I dismissed him. A messenger then arrived from the Holy Prophet that I should have no intercourse with my wife. I asked him if I were to divorce her. He said no, simply to keep aloof. I immediately sent my wife away to her parents and lived alone. I understood that the same order had been

conveyed to the other two defaulters Life grew a burden to me In this manner I spent some fifty days One night as I lay on my terrace alone and disconsolate, I heard Hazreth Abu Bekr's voice calling me by name and congratulating me on my repentance having been accepted by Allah and a pardon granted On hearing this all my relations and friends swarmed around me and were loud in their congratulations I immediately prostrated myself before the Lord and offered my humble heart felt thanks I then got up and ran to where the Holy Prophet was and saluted him He replied, his noble face shining like full moon with pleasure, "Come O Kaab this is the happiest day of your life rejoice that Allah has forgiven you" "O prophet of Allah", cried I, "shall I to express my gratitude give away all I possess as alms in the way of Allah"? "No, not all" "A half then"? "No, not even a half" "A third portion thereof my dear master"? "Yes, you may give away a third portion" Such were the early Muslims firm in their faith and sincerely devoted to the Holy Prophet Their love towards him knew no bounds and they were always ready to sacrifice all they had, their families and themselves at his orders Hence he was pleased to call them 'Shining stars to guide the after Muslims' No doubt they deserved the appellation

The above were all the wars in which the Holy Prophet was engaged The reader will have seen that not one of his wars was unjust or aggressive He was by nature merciful and averse to blood shed During all the wars he never killed *any one person with his hand*

Reflections on
the wars of the
Holy Prophet

Wars were rather forced upon him, and it was his duty as the head of the State and the guardian of the Muslims to make war against those who first attacked him and his followers If he had not done so, the Muslims and their allies would have been butchered like sheep and not a Muslim would have been left on the face of the earth He never made any war of extermination, he never had any women or children or non combatant men killed

Nor did he put to death a single prisoner of war, excepting those whom the common law of the country had already condemned for murder and similar offences. The wise and humane laws inaugurated about conducting wars, making treaties, and the treatment to be accorded to prisoners of war, form noble trophies of Islam, not merely of conquest over men but also of humanity over barbarism. Would that the world had followed the example set by this humane teacher of men! War will no doubt last in the world till humanity lasts. It is a necessary evil, but if the restrictions imposed upon it by the noble teacher of Arabia were respected and obeyed much of the horror of it would be mitigated. And the laws of Hazrath Muhammad (peace and blessings on him!) were made some fourteen centuries ago, when the world was steeped in darkness and barbarity. Now a day, when the world pretends to a high state of civilization it makes one's hair stand on end to hear the savage barbarities committed by the "highly civilized" nations of Europe. Read the history of the wars of the Crusades. What untold horrors fill its pages. The soldiers of Christ (peace on him!) as they called themselves, committed acts which the soldiers of Satan would have been ashamed to commit. They even became cannibals, eating human flesh. Then look at the forgiving and chivalrous treatment accorded to them by the Muslims.

CHAPTER XIII

The Holy Prophet did not confine his teachings to his own country men the Arabs but he also sent epistles to all the kings and ruling princes then known, being a world prophet and reformer of all men. Many of them embraced Islam, whilst many others did not. Nagasi the king of Abyssinia, the king of Bohrain, the king of Omman, the king of Nejd, the king of Ghassan, the governor of Syria, the ruler of Doomatul-jandal, and the sovereign of the powerful clan of Humair, all these became Muslims. The last mentioned per-

The letters of the Holy Prophet to several ruling potentates

son like the Pharoah of old had proclaimed himself a god, and his subjects used to prostrate themselves before him, and acknowledge him as their god. On embracing Islam, he set free eighteen thousand slaves in one day, and giving up his kingdom lived the life of an ascetic. The governor of Damascus, the ruler of Yamama, the king of Egypt, the emperors of Persia and of Rome refused to accept Islam. The questions put by emperor Heraclius to the envoy are recorded in history and point to his keen insight and strong commonsense. He received the envoy with respect and after making enquiries about the Holy Prophet he wished to make further enquiries from other men. He ordered that any non-Muslim respectable Arab that might be found should be brought to him. Abu Sufyan the prophet's bitterest enemy at the time happened to be in Syria and was taken to the emperor's presence. The following conversation then took place.

Heraclius "What is the pedigree of the Prophet?"

Abu Sufyan "He belongs to the Qoreish the noblest tribe of the Arabs."

The enquiry of
Emperor Heraclius
regarding
the Holy Prophet

On getting this reply the emperor remarked "Yes, prophets are always raised from the noblest stock so that none might be ashamed to follow and obey them."

Heraclius "Had any of the Qoreish ever before claimed to be prophets or kings?"

Abu Sufyan "No."

Heraclius "If any one before him had claimed such a dignity I should have thought that Muhammad (peace and blessings on him!) was imitating him. Was this man accustomed to telling lies before becoming a prophet?"

Abu Sufyan "Never. On the contrary he was surnamed 'Al Amin', or the 'Truthfull,'"

- Heraclius " Yes a person who never told a lie to men cannot tell a lie against God Was there any king in his line of fathers ? "
- Abu Sufyan " None "
- Heraclius " If any of his forefathers had been kings I should have thought that he was trying to recover his patrimonial kingdom, under the pretext of being a prophet Who are the present followers of Muhammad (peace and blessings on him ') are they mighty and wealthy chieftains or are they poor and lowly ? "
- Abu Sufyan " Poor and lowly for the most part "
- Heraclius " It is always the case that when a prophet is raised, it is only the poor and the humble that flock to him in the beginning Are the converts increasing or decreasing day after day ? "
- Abu Sufyan " Increasing "
- Heraclius " Faith always progresses slowly and steadily it does not diminish Are any of his converts turning back from his religion " ?
- Abu Sufyan " No "
- Heraclius " When Faith settles down in men's mind, it never leaves Does this prophet ever break his promises or treaties "
- Abu Sufyan " Up to now he has never done so , it remains to be seen what he will do in future "
- Heraclius " Prophets of God never break their word It is only seekers after worldly wealth that

do so and prophets are not worldly minded
Have you ever fought a battle with him ?
And if so with what result " ?

Abu Sufyan " Yes, sometimes he wins and sometimes his enemies "

Heraclius " That has been the experience of all prophets, but eventually they win always But what are his teachings " ?

Abu Sufyan " He preaches that we should worship The One God alone, giving up the idol worship to which we and our fathers have been accustomed, that we should perform Namaz, keep fasts, speak the truth always, keep our bodies and minds clean and be attached and helpful to our relations "

Heraclius " I find all the signs shown to us of the expected prophet of God in this person but I thought he would appear in Syria, and if you have spoken the truth, he will one day occupy Syria and Palestine without doubt O ! that I could have gone up to the prophet and washed his feet "

The historians say that Heraclius was personally much inclined towards Islam and spoke in its favour, but that on the Holy Prophet's letter being read out such a hubbub was made by the priests and the bishops that he was afraid for his life and his crown and pretended that he had proposed to them all to become Muslims simply with a view to test their strength of faith in Christianity Some historians think that he was a Muslim at heart but afraid to avow it openly for fear of losing the crown , whilst others think he was not as he subsequently fought against the Muslims

Khusro, the Persian Emperor, on the Holy Prophet's letter being opened and read out fell into a rage and tore it into pieces, not because of the contents of the epistle but because according to Arab practice it ran "From Muhammad the messenger of Allah to Khusro Kasra, the great Emperor of Persia." "What ! a despicable Arab, a subject of mine, dares to write his own name in the letter before mine !" and he forthwith issued an order to Bazan his viceroy at Yemen to arrest him and send him up in custody to his court. When the envoy came back and reported how his epistle had been torn to pieces the Holy Prophet simply observed "He has torn out the order of sovereignty from his race." What a short and yet a terrible sentence ! The Persian Empire was a very extensive and powerful ancient empire, rival to the great Roman one. Within a few short years during the Caliphate of Hazrath Omar, Persia was conquered by the Muslims and nearly fourteen centuries have elapsed since the Holy Prophet pronounced the anathema and as foretold by him sovereignty has indeed passed away from the race ever since. There is not even a petty principality left anywhere in the world to fire worshippers. An empire which existed for thousands of years and comprised about a half of the world has disappeared. When Khusro wrote to his viceroy at Yemen to send up the Holy Prophet in custody to his court Bazan deputed two officers with a small detachment of military escort to appear before the Holy Prophet and communicate the order of the emperor, and in case he should decline, to come back and report to him. When these officers appeared before him and informed the Holy Prophet that he was wanted by the Persian Emperor he told them to come the next day. When they appeared before him the next day he informed them that during the last night Allah had destroyed Khusro and bade them go and make enquiries. They therefore went back to Bazan who subsequently received despatches announcing that Emperor's son Shiruya had on the night told by the Holy Prophet, killed his father and assumed the crown. Bazan made further enquiries about

The letter to
the Persian
Emperor

the Holy Prophet and embraced Islam and so did many others of his country with him

On a certain journey the Holy Prophet's camel strayed into the jungle during the night and could not be found though a thorough search was made for it. Some one of the Hypocrites remarked to another, "What, he a prophet of Allah and yet unable to know where his camel has strayed?" This reaching the Holy Prophet's ears, he at once prayed to Allah and an angel informed him of its whereabouts. He sent some of his followers to the spot indicated and sure enough the camel was there and was brought back at once. Muir in recording the incident puts the word "*Supernatural*" about the information conveyed to the Holy Prophet regarding the lost camel, by way of ridicule, a sneering innuendo. But in recording the Holy Prophet's communicating the assassination of the Khusro which had occurred on the preceding night he simply states that having had previous information the Holy Prophet apprised Bazan of the death of his master. He does not explain how the news of an occurrence at Persia reached the Holy Prophet the same night at Arabia even before it reached the Viceroy. Was there an aerial set installed in the hut of the Holy Prophet? Bazan on making enquiries and finding all the details of the information correct was convinced of the miraculous powers of the Holy Prophet and became a Muslim, otherwise he had no reason to change his faith. Certainly we can credit Bazan with sense enough to understand what was miraculous and what not, as he was the ruling Viceroy of an Emperor.

Now began deputations to pour in from all over the country, Arabia, to the Holy Prophet at Medina. Tribe after tribe, clan after clan, voluntarily came forward and embraced Islam. Those that had been the worst enemies of Islam became its sincere and zealous adherents. No one

Sir W Muir's
derisive innu-
endo against
the Holy Pro-
phet's mira-
culous know-
ledge

Islam spreads
throughout
Arabia

compelled them to accept Islam, nor offered them any bribes, but Allah so changed their hearts that the citizens and the Bedouins vied with one another for priority in becoming Muslims. Within ten short years Arabia became a purely monotheistic country, not a temple not an idol-worshipper remained throughout the vast peninsula. History furnishes no parallel to this at any time or in any country. The Holy Prophet had completely fulfilled the mission for which he had been sent into the world. Such entire success had not been given to any other Prophet before him. As he realised that the work entrusted to him by Allah had been completed he perceived that his further stay in this world would be short.

Out of his great affection and compassion for his followers, he resolved to make a last journey to Mecca to perform the Hajj and to give a parting sermon and advice to them. He was accompanied by 140,000 followers. After offering sacrifices and performing the ceremonials of the Hajj the Holy Prophet rode his camel and ascending Mount Arafat made the following exhortation:

“Listen to my words attentively O people! for I do not know whether I can meet you at this place another time. Your blood, your property and your reputations are as sacred to one another amongst you as is this day and this month sacred to you all. The Lord has made definite apportionment of inheritance amongst you, make therefore no disposition by testament prejudicial to the rightful heirs. O people! remember that you are shortly to appear before your Lord, who will question you regarding your doings in this life. Take care that you stray not from the right path after I am gone nor begin to cut one another's throats. O people! this day I trample under foot the evil usages of the days of Ignorance. I abolish the blood feud from the country. I begin with my own family. The young nephew of mine, Ayas, son of Harith, son of Abdul Muttalib who was murdered by the tribe of Huzil, I freely relinquish our

The last Hajj
or Pilgrimage
to Mecca

The Holy
Prophet's ex-
hortation to
140,000 Mus-
lims

right to avenge him I also cancel all usury of the olden days commencing with what is due to my uncle Abbas No father shall be charged with the crimes committed by his son, nor a son with those of a father A muslim is a brother to another muslim, so take care you usurp nothing belonging to him but what you acquire lawfully from him, be ye all servants of Allah and brothers to one another Ye men ye have your rights and ye women ye have your rights as well Ye men treat your wives with kindness, remember that you have taken them on the security of Allah and their persons are made lawful to you Bear in mind that the most disliked by God of all lawful actions is divorce As regards your slaves feed them with what you yourselves eat and clothe them with the clothes you wear Impose not upon them work beyond their strength and if you do so, help them in their work Whosoever beats his slave without fault or slaps him in the face, he must free that slave as a penance Every person ill-treating his slaves will be shut from Paradise Forgive the faults of your slaves seventy times a day Remember that nothing pleases the Lord more than the freeing of slaves O people I leave behind me a guide which if you hold fast and follow, you can never go astray,—the Holy Qoran Know ye people that no prophet will come after me nor will any new nation be formed Fail not to keep up prayers five times a day, to keep fasts in the holy month of Ramzan and to pay up 'zakat' (legal alms) willingly and cheerfully Also perform the Hajj of the house of the God Obey your guardians and rulers If you do all this, Allah will let you enter His garden, the Paradise O people you will be questioned by Allah about me, what will be your evidence regarding me? Thereupon with one accord the people replied "O Prophet of Allah may He reward you with the choicest reward for the noble way in which you have carried out your mission, you have delivered His message faithfully, turned us from evil ways into right ones and we all bear witness to it" Here the Holy Prophet raised his forefinger to heaven and said, "O Lord be Thou a witness to what Thy creatures say" He said this thrice Then

enjoining the hearers to convey his advice to those that were absent and praising Allah for His mercies, he concluded the sermon. At the same place was revealed the verse of the Holy Qoran "This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed my favour on you and chosen for you Islam as a religion" (Holy Qoran 5 3)

After delivering this exemplary address to his followers the Holy Prophet returned to Medina. He was aware of his approaching end and therefore set about organizing the provinces and tribes which had accepted Islam. Some of his companions were sent out to the provinces to give full and detailed instructions about Islam and all matters connected with it. Hazrath Muaz bin Jabal was sent to Yemen. The Holy Prophet asked him when leaving, what would be his guide in determining affairs of administration and he replied "The God's law as given in the Holy Qoran" "But if you fail to find it in the Holy Qoran?" "Then I will follow the precedent of the Prophet" "Supposing even that fails?" "I will use my own judgement in such a case" The Holy Prophet highly approved of this answer. He deputed Hazrath Ali to Yemama and his advice to him was, "when two parties come before thee for justice do not decide until thou hearest both parties"

About this time one Musailama hearing of the declining health of the Holy Prophet collected a few wild Arabs around him and set himself up as a Prophet. He even audaciously sent a letter to the Holy Prophet in the following terms

"From Musailama the Prophet of God to Muhammed (peace and blessings on him) the Prophet of God I am your partner, the power must be divided between us. Let half the earth be mine and the other half thine"

The following crushing and memorable reply was sent to him

“From Muhammad (peace and blessings on him!) the Prophet of God to Musailama the Liar Peace be upon those who follow the straight path The earth belongs to Allah alone He bestows it upon whom He pleases Only those prosper who fear the Lord”

This pretender nicknamed Liar was afterwards killed by Wahshi the man who had killed Hazrath Hamza and his followers were dispersed by Hazrath Khaled bin Waleed

The short chapter entitled the ‘Help’ was revealed at Mecca at the time of the last Hajj It runs thus

“In the name of Allah, the beneficent the merciful
The chapter entitled Help revealed at Mecca When there comes the help of God and the victory, and thou seest men entering the religion of God in companies celebrate the praise of thy Lord and ask His forgiveness for He is oft returning to mercy” (Holy Qoran Ch 110)

When this chapter was revealed Hazrath Abu Bekr was present and as he heard it he began to shed tears

Hazrath Abu Bekr sheds tears on his listening to its recital He found out from the context that the Holy Prophet was about to be taken away from them Allah had ordered him to ask forgiveness for all the hordes that were joining Islam and the Holy Prophet would not be with them to instruct them fully in it and his asking forgiveness for them would ensure their salvation

A’etekaf in Islam is a self imposed discipline by a Muslim over himself He sits in a Mosque continuously for several days and nights, leaving it only to take food and answer calls of nature and resuming his seat immediately afterwards

A’etekaf in Islam a disciplinary measure During the sitting he carefully refrains from all worldly and unnecessary actions and movements, concentrating his mind on Allah, reads or recites the Qoran, says his prayers and then resumes his seat This is called ‘sitting in A’etekak’ During the sitting he talks

to no body and keeps his mind as also his limbs in perfect control, not allowing any useless thoughts to enter his mind nor his eyes to wander about nor allowing his hands and feet to move unnecessarily Of course he keeps fast all the time This is done for concentration of mind and subjugation of the animal passions The Holy Prophet used every year in the month of Ramzan thus to sit in A'etekaf for the last ten days of the month, this year being his last, he sat up for twenty days This was a hint to his people that his departure was near He had actually informed his beloved daughter Hazrath Bibi Fatima of his approaching end, upon which she fell crying he comforted her by saying that she would be the first to join him in Paradise of all his family and thus it did happen Within six months of his decease the daughter died also, none of the family having pre deceased her

A month before his death he gathered all the Muslims in the mosque and said "O Muslims if I have wronged any of you consciously or unconsciously here I am to make reparation Speak out freely and fear not It is better to settle matters here than be ashamed for them on the Day of Judgement " On this, one of them said that the Holy Prophet had taken three dirhems (coins of silver) to give to a beggar and they had not been repaid The debt was forthwith cleared Then he addressed a short speech and said "O people may God keep you under His protection and render you all help in uplifting you and keeping you in the right path I warn you always to practise piety and keep in mind the fear of the Lord I advise you not to assume a haughty over-weening mien, for Allah is with the humble and the lowly, and those who make no mischief I see clearly the vast conquests which you will make and I do not think that you will relapse into idolatory and polythiesm but I am afraid lest plenty lead you to luxury and the love of this world bring about your fall, as the previous nations fell I make my salutation to you and to all who come to me through Islam till the end of the world "

The last admonition to Muslims

He then prayed fervently for all those Muslims who had died or otherwise suffered for their faith, and bade the Mohajers and all Muslims hold in honour the Ansars or the helpers. He said "The number of believers will increase but the number of helpers never can. They were my family and protectors, with whom I found a home when an exile and they believed in me when the world persecuted me, May they, their children and their children's children fare well both in this world and the world to come." Five days before his demise he cautioned the Muslims against making a worshipping place of his sepulchre, as had done some nations before. The Holy Prophet was ill altogether for fourteen days. For eleven days during the illness he conducted the prayers of the congregation as usual but after that for the last three days whenever he attempted to make his ablution he fainted. He therefore directed Hazrath Abu Bekr to take his place at the public prayers. When the latter stood up in place of the Holy Prophet there was such demonstration of grief and agitation, people thinking that the Holy Prophet had expired, that the noise reached his ears and summoning all his strength and resting his arms on the shoulders of two of his relatives, he slowly came out and showed himself to the people. He bade Hazrath Abu Bekr proceed with the prayer, seating himself by his left hand and after the conclusion of the prayer addressed the congregation as follows

"I have heard that the rumour of the death of your Prophet filled you with alarm, but has any prophet before me lived for ever that ye think I should never leave you? Every event has its appointed time which is neither to be hastened nor avoided. I return to Him who sent me, and my last request to you is that you remain united, that ye love, honour, and uphold one another in what is reasonable that ye exhort one another to faith and constancy in belief and in doing righteous things, by these alone men prosper all else leads to destruction. I am now about to leave world and entrust you to the mercy and protection of Allah."

Then whatever property was in the house was given away to the poor as alms and the Holy Prophet distributed his arms to the Muslims. The night before the morning of his decease, his wife Hazrath Bibi Ayesha had borrowed

The last disposal of the Holy Prophet's property

some oil for the lamp from a neighbour and the Holy Prophet's armour was pledged with a Jew for thirty measures of barley.

To Hazrath Ali when he came to him for the last time his words were "Remember God in treating slaves male or female, feed and clothe them well and always talk to them kindly. And O Ali be patient and persevering and constant in your patience." This was no doubt a hint to him that he would have to face many unpleasant things, which afterwards he had to

CHAPTER XIV

Muir is of opinion that the fact of the oil being borrowed is a fabrication by Hazrath Bibi Ayesha made for

Muir's malicious remark on the poverty of the Holy Prophet

her own aggrandisement and he thinks also that the poverty of the Holy Prophet's household was exaggerated by her for the same purpose for she has said "often days

and occasionally weeks elapsed before a fire was lit in our house, for cooking purposes, our fare during such times was only dates and water." Touching the other fact, the Holy Prophet's armour being in pawn with a Jew for some measures of barley, this hostile critic is discreetly silent, as he could not refute a well authenticated fact. He could not make any insinuation regarding it. But what aggrandisement of herself could the noble mother of the Muslims have contemplated by creating a false story that she borrowed a little oil from a neighbour is far beyond our conception. Was not the glory of being the Holy Prophet's beloved consort enough for her and how could this paltry incident of the oil borrowing add to her lustre to make her go the length of telling a wilful lie? He gives no proof whatever of the alleged fabrication, it is only a mere supposition on his part. But coming from a hostile Christian it deserves no credit. Every one judges others according to his own standard.

How is it possible for gormandizing and wine bibbing Christians to understand the holy abstemious lives the prophets of Allah and other pious men led? Why did they voluntarily impose hunger upon themselves why did they often fast? They courted poverty and want and if ever gold and silver came to them they made haste to dispose of it in charity and got rid of it as if it were poison to them

When a vast sum of several thousands was brought from Bohrein to this same noble lady as her share she did not allow it to be carried into the house but deposited it in the verandah and began distributing it by handfuls amongst the poor so that not a single dirham remained with her till sun set When all had been given away her maid servant told her, "Mistress if you had given me a dirham or two I would have bought meat therewith as there is no meat in the house for evening repast" "I would have given it to you if you had reminded me of it earlier, but as all has been spent wait for the next opportunity," was the reply

The Holy Prophet's prayer to Allah was to feed him one day so that he might render thanks to Him for having fed him and make him fast the next day so that he might show his dependence on Him and beg of Him his bread for the day And this was his practice as long as he lived As for his progeny his prayer was, "O Allah give them bread enough to subsist on so that they might not famish but not so much as to make them rebellious and proud and indifferent to the hunger and suffering of others"

Hazrath Omar was once offered a cup of milk sweetened with honey to drink when he asked for drinking water He looked at the cup and said, "No doubt thy taste will be sweet, but I will not taste thee lest Allah say that I have had enough of luxuries in this world and so

Hazrath Bibi
Ayesha's
charity

The Holy pro-
phet's prayer
about bread for
himself and his
progeny

Hazrath Omar
declines a cup of
milk and honey

none is left for me in the next," so saying he declined to drink it

Hazrath Ali's usual fare was barley bread with a little vinegar or a little salt. Latterly he gave this up too and contented himself with meal of roasted

Hazrath Ali's
usual fare

barley or wheat which he soaked in water and swallowed so that much time might not be wasted in masticating bread, which time

could be used more profitably in prayer. He used to say to his people, "I do not prohibit you from eating meat but make not your bellies a grave yard for animals." How then can men whose sole concern in life is eating and drinking and administering to their animal wants either understand or appreciate why holy men have abstained from eating belly full and courted hunger and kept voluntary fasts! One reason is that hunger plays a

The effect of
hunger on the
spirit

great part in developing and purifying the spirit. The more a man eats the more his senses become clogged and his intellect is

dulled and if in addition drinks wine or other intoxicants, the fumes ascend up to his brain and deaden or muddle it. He remains no longer a man with normal understanding and spirituality, but becomes a brute or rather worse than a brute, though retaining his outward shape as a human being. Hunger sharpens intellect and makes a man alert and active. This is the reason why all Muslims are enjoined to fast one whole month after eleven months, as minimum. Pious God-fearing Muslims go much beyond it, for about half their days they keep fast and some even more.

The Emperor of Rome sent an eminent physician a master in his profession to stay with the Holy Prophet and treat him and his followers as occasions should arise. He came with a camel load of medicines and books and waited upon him. For one whole year he remained but not a single case of sickness occurred. He then represented to the Holy Prophet that his medicines were losing

A Roman Physi-
cian sent to the
Holy Prophet

their effect and his books becoming worm-eaten as no one fell ill and he had no opportunity of showing his skill. The Holy Prophet smiled and told him, "Friend, we Muslims never sit down to eat until we are keenly hungry and stop eating when yet a part of our hunger remains unsatisfied and hence no disease ever attacks us nor are we ever in need of a physician." The physician then took his leave and went back to the Emperor, observing that men who were so guarded in eating can never require the services of a physician. Even doctors of our own days say that nine-tenths of the disease is due to over feeding and that more people die of over eating than of hunger and starvation. Muhi who seems to derive great pleasure from belittling everything connected with the Holy Prophet considers that his poverty was exaggerated and the scarcity of victuals at his table was due to incoming guests some of whom were always present. Had the Holy Prophet so chosen, all sorts of dainties and luxurious viands would have filled his table in right royal plenty but he *chose* poverty and lived on barely bread and water like a poor man,

In another place this same author writes that the Holy Prophet 'cast his eye' (of carnal desire) on a certain female prisoner of war and took her for his service. He else-where writes that the Holy Prophet developed a desire with advancing age to enlarge his harem without detailing the causes which led to each marriage. What a sordid thought! If the Holy Prophet had so wished he could have kept a harem of a thousand beautiful virgins, a complete galaxy of beauties. Who could have prevented him from doing so, on the contrary fathers would have been but too glad to give their daughters to the Holy Prophet. If carnal desire were the motive he would not have chosen widows, many of them of advanced or middle age. Not knowing the circumstances and the true reasons for which each of the nine marriages he contracted, Christian writers according to their own corrupt desires attribute his marriages to carnal desire. If instead of

About the Holy
Prophet's
marriages

putting down on paper what his own imagination suggested this critic had taken the trouble to examine minutely the motives which led to each marriage he would have found that they were quite different from what he supposes There may be several causes why a man should take a woman under his protection, besides carnal desire Then why hit upon it alone as the prompting cause ?

Many prophets of Allah before the Holy Prophet have had a plurality of wives Hazraths Abiahram, Issac, Jacob, Moses, Solomon, and many others (peace on them all!) all had several wives and the last is said to have had a thousand wives though the Quran limits the number to one hundred Were they all lustful men ? Christians cannot understand the holy nature of the prophets of Allah They judge them according to their own hearts This is the great mistake into which all Christians fall There can be no comparison between ordinary men and Allah's prophets Their carnal desires have been removed from them And if they marry more wives than one it is not out of lust but for very different reasons With a hundred wives beside him Hazrath Solomon (peace on him!) never for a moment neglected his remembrance of Allah Christians can have no true conception of the position and dignity of a prophet of Allah, for their so called scriptures contain such shameful stories of prophets' committing incest with their own daughters, worshipping idols besides God, becoming dead drunk and committing adultery and what not, that the subject had better be avoided No doubt all these shameful stories were fabricated and inserted in the scriptures by priests for their own sinister purposes Christians believing all these tales to be true judge of the Holy Prophet of Islam by the same false standard Hence their error

Many prophets
had a number of
wives

Shameful stories
in the Bible
about the pro-
phets of Allah

It is not necessary for us to examine in detail here the several circumstances in which the Holy Prophet contracted each one of his marriages If we judge with

an unbiassed mind we will find that there were good grounds political, social, humane and religious for each one of them and it was not mere carnal desire that prompted him. One strong and obvious reason was that he had to instruct women on points peculiar to their sex such as menstruation, pregnancy, child birth, lactation, conjugal union etc, which a modest man avoids talking about with strange females. He disseminated this knowledge of Muslim Law through his wives. In the case of this captive girl Mu'ni refers to she was the daughter of a Chief of the Jews and the wife of another, she had lost them both in the battle and was extremely helpless and bewildered. The double calamity which had suddenly fallen upon her and her extremely woeful plight might have touched the noble heart of the merciful prophet and excited his compassion and considering the social position she had lost all on a sudden he might have decided to take her into his own protection and thus exalt her status instead of assigning her to a common soldier of the army as otherwise she would certainly have been. Even fighting the Christian on his own ground and granting that her good looks prompted the Holy Prophet to take her for himself this was an action expressly sanctioned by God and there was nothing in it unlawful or derogatory to a prophet nor was there anything in it for a Christian to sneer at. Compare the following divine commandments to Moses (peace on him!)

“When thou goest forth to war against thine enemies and the Lord thy God hath delivered them into thine hands, and thou hast taken them captive and seest among the captives a beautiful woman, and hast a desire unto her, that thou wouldst have her to thy wife,

Then thou shalt bring her home to thine house, and she shall shave her head and pare her nails, And she shall put the raiment of her captivity from off her, and shall remain in thine house, and bewail her father and her mother a full month and after that thou shalt go unto her and be her husband, and she shall be thy wife” (Deuteronomy Ch 21 10-13)

It is hardly consistent with common sense and probability to suppose that person who led an exemplary conjugal life with a widow lady fifteen years his senior for the best years of his life, should after his fiftieth year of age when all the pruriency of human nature had disappeared should all at once become a libertine. Naturally therefore unprejudiced men will seek for some more reasonable explanation for the marriages.

Another popular allegation against the Holy Prophet is that he allowed four wives to his followers but made an exception in his own favour and transgressed his own law. In no previous heavenly book is there any limit put upon the number of wives, a person may have. Men chose as many as they pleased. Even Jesus (peace on him!) has nowhere stated that a man should have only one wife or that he should not have more than one. The result was that wives were looked upon as chattel. The Holy Quran

The Holy Quran the only Heavenly Book restricting the number of wives

being the last of Allah's messages and intended for the guidance of all man-kind for all time laid down the law as to how many wives a man might have and whom he might marry and whom not.

According to this law a male is allowed to marry one, two, three or four wives according to his necessity but always provided that he is able to accord equal treatment to all in every respect. But if he should be unable to maintain this balance he must content himself with one only. It will thus be seen that marrying more than one

Restricted polygamy permissive and not compulsory

wife is permissive and not binding and that the permission is coupled with such a restriction that in effect it amounts almost to a prohibition. Yet the code must have such a

law to meet all contingent cases. Suppose a man's wife should prove barren, if the husband be not allowed to marry another wife his line will end with himself. Similarly if the wife should turn out a valetudinary or otherwise unfit to discharge her conjugal duties, the man to preserve his health and to beget children must be allowed to re-marry.

Supposing that the man is unable to maintain more than one wife, in such circumstances he must have the power to divorce the barren or useless wife.

Of divorce

Or if the wife should prove a virago and make a hell of her husband's home he must be given the power to divorce her. But the Holy Prophet has said that of all lawful actions divorce is the most displeasing in the sight of Allah. It is further restrained by the rule that the divorce must be pronounced three times with an interval of a month after each pronouncement, so that the husband can take back his divorced wife again to his bosom, if so inclined. This restriction is imposed to restrain men from divorcing their wives in a fit of rage or otherwise abuse the law. The deep wisdom underlying this provision will be clear to those who consider the matter carefully. It is the fashion of Christian critics to point out the law of divorce and polygamy as the great drawbacks of Islam. It must be understood that Islam is a practical religion, and its ordinances are such as can be worked out in actual life. We see that regulated and restrained polygamy is the best preserver of female chastity. Where polygamy is not allowed

Polyandry
and prostitu-
tion prevail
where poly-
gamy is not
allowed

polyandry and prostitution prevail. Abortions and child murders abound. Christian writers themselves assert that it is become quite a fashion among Christian women in Europe to have a lover or lovers publicly by the name of friends of the family in addition to the husband.

The poor helpless husband is obliged to endure this tacitly, and as silently as he can for he has no remedy in his hands. As for going to law, it is out of the question. It is extremely hard to prove a case of adultery to the satisfaction of a law court and supposing that one out of a score of cases is proved the delay, the expense, the public exposure and shame of a family scandal will ruin the lives of both the husband and the wife. If on the other hand the wife knew that her husband had the power to divorce her, she would no doubt be more circumspect in her behaviour. So far from divorce being a blemish in a religion it is so invaluable that all Christian countries have adopted it in their law courts, though it is in direct contravention of their teacher's commands. In Europe and America divorce cases are running into thousands every year. Then why blame Islam? As for the allegation that the Holy Prophet broke

The Prophet never transgressed the law of Marriage

the fact in his own favour this is sheer calumny By the time divine commands were received restraining the number of wives he already had his nine wives He was restrained from marrying any more wives or divorcing those he had Thus we see that there was no transgression of the law Islam in its early stage was progressive It dealt with existing vices one after another by slow degrees

CHAPTER XV

The demise of the Holy Prophet

On the 28th of Safer 11 A H the Holy Prophet having fully accomplished what he had been sent for, left this world with the last words, "Pardon O Lord, the companion on High" May Allah's choicest blessings shower down upon him and his for ever and ever! Great was the grief into which all the Muslims were plunged Some could not at first believe that he had really left the world One companion prayed to Allah that his eye-sight might be taken away as he did not wish to look upon any other face after having seen that of the Holy Prophet for the last time And what is more, his prayer was granted Some were stunned mute with the blow Others confined themselves in their homes and never went out but for prayers to the mosque Hazrath Omar became frantic with grief and drawing out his sword stood watch saying that if any one should say the Holy Prophet had expired, he would behead him Hazrath Abu Bekr then came up and kissing the forehead of the Holy Prophet exclaimed 'Sweet wert thou in life, and sweet art thou in death' Then he recited certain verses of the Holy Qoran to convince people that Hazrath Muhammad (peace and blessings on him!) was a mortal like other Prophets and had indeed passed away, but his Allah was and would always be alive The recitation of the verses brought them back to their senses

In stature he was of middle height with a commanding personality. His complexion was white and red. He had a broad chest, and an oval face with a slightly acquiline nose. His eyes jet black shone from under his thick eye lashes, there were some-what tinged with streaks of red. This was perhaps due to his long vigils at nights for prayer and communion. His forehead was broad and clear. His mouth was ornamented with two rows of pearl-like white beautiful teeth. His head was capacious and his whole face expressed dignity and benevolence. Those that looked at him at once revered him and if they remained with him for some time loved him, so greatly was this attractive power developed in this noblest specimen of humanity that his enemies called him an enchanter. His hair was slightly curled and a graceful black beard decorated his manly face. His body was rather thin, sinewy and wiry. His hands were soft and tender like those of a woman with long tapering fingers. In walking his step was quick and elastic yet firm. In turning his face towards anybody he used to turn his whole body towards him. His gait and demeanour were dignified and commanded respect. He never laughed aloud but his smile was enchanting.

In his personal habits he was most simple, retaining the same humility throughout his life. The following is his description as given by a learned Christian biographer.

“His constitution was extremely delicate. Eminently unpractical in all common things of life, he was gifted with mighty powers of imagination, elevation of mind, delicacy and refinement of feeling. He is more modest than a virgin behind her curtain, it was said of him. He was most indulgent to his inferiors and would never allow his awkward little page to be scolded whatever he did. “Ten years”, said Anas his servant, “was I about the Holy Prophet and he never said as much as ‘Uff’ to me”. He was very affectionate towards his family. One of his boys died on his breast in the smoky house of the nurse, a black-

smith's wife He was very fond of children, he would stop them in the street and pat their little heads He never struck anyone in his life The worst expression he ever made use of in conversation was, what has come to him? May his fore head be darkened with mud' When he was asked to curse some one he replied, 'I have not been sent to curse but to be a mercy to man kind' He visited the sick, followed any bier he met, accepted the invitation of a slave to dinner, mended his own clothes, milked the goats and waited upon himself says another tradition He never first withdrew his hand out of another man's palm and turned not before the other had turned He was the most faithful protector of those he protected, the sweetest and most agreeable in conversation Those who saw him were suddenly filled with reverence those who came near him loved him, they who described him would say 'I have never seen his like before or after' He was of great taciturnity, when he spoke it was with emphasis and deliberation and no one could forget what he said He lived with his wives in a row of humble cottages, separated from one another by palm branches, cemented together with mud He would kindle the fire, sweep the floor and milk the goats himself The little food he had was always shared with those who dropped in to partake of it His ordinary food was dates and water or barley bread, milk and honey were luxuries of which he was fond but which he rarely allowed himself The fare of the desert seemed most congenial to him even when he was sovereign of Arabia "

He was most affable to his inferiors While his countenance was noble and majestic, it was attractive rather than repulsive People always crowded round him as moths round a flame His presence inspired reverence and love but not repellent awe or fear He mixed freely with his followers and sat down in their midst where ever space was available He never had a particular or raised seat for himself and would be displeased when people stood up to greet and respect him Any slave, male or female out in the streets used to hold him by the hand and

leading him aside, begin to pour out his or her tedious complaint in his ears. He used patiently to listen and comfort them and give them redress. He used to carry his own purchases even though his disciples asked him to allow the things to be carried by them. "No," he would say, "the owner of a thing is its best carrier." He never said nay to a mendicant, he used to give away whatever he had with him or if at times nothing was available, used to tell him to take a loan from somebody and that he (the Holy Prophet) would repay it, to the creditor. His kindness extended to the dumb animals. He blessed a woman when he saw her draw water from a well and quench the thirst of a dog which was nearly dying of thirst and he cursed an old woman for so tying up her cat without giving it anything to eat, that it died. Whilst riding with a follower or a slave in attendance he used to share the ride with him, getting down to allow him to have his turn in riding. With untold treasures at his command he led the life of an ascetic eating the coarsest food and of that sparingly and wearing the commonest apparel till it was worn out thread bare and had been patched up several times. He never slept on a soft bed and his pillow was leather stuffed with the bark of date trees. Indeed he never indulged in long sleep at all. Three or four hours was the most he would allot for sleep out of the twenty four, the rest of the night he spent in prayer, sometimes standing up whole nights till his legs swelled. Whilst all Arabia trembled before him he made it a habit to personally visit the houses of the old, the infirm, the widow and the orphan to enquire about their welfare to fetch things for them from the bazaar and execute their little commissions.

The lament of
his daughter
on his death

Soon after the Holy Prophet breathed his last, his daughter Hazrath Bibi Fatima addressed him thus "O beloved father you have accepted the invitation of the Lord and gone over to Paradise. Who will inform Gabriel of your demise and on whom will he descend with revelations from Allah? O Lord let my soul be taken to the presence of my father and gladden me with his sight. O

Lord, deprive me not of the reward for this affliction and of my father's intercession for me before Thee on the Day of Judgment Amen !”

His wife Hazrath Bibi Ayesha moaned thus “ Alas the prophet of God who preferred poverty to riches and want to affluence, has passed away Woe is me, the prophet who never once slept a whole night long in his anxiety for the betterment and the salvation of his followers, who always strove with indefatigable perseverance and success against his passions, who never once even glanced at prohibited things, the prophet whose pearl like teeth were broken with stones and whose noble forehead wounded and cut by enemies and yet he never gave heed to personal injuries he who never ate of barely bread a belly full for two days in succession has bereaved us by his departure ”

Hazrath Ali, his cousin and son in law said, “ May my father and mother be made a sacrifice for you, (this is an idiomatic expression of the Arabs expressive of the highest reverence and love to the person addressed) your death has deprived us of what no other death could have done (he meant the office of prophet-hood and divine revelations to him) Your separation has benumbed our hearts and this great calamity is one which afflicts all the nation If you had not prohibited us from weeping and lamentations we should have lamented over you for ever even that could not have lessened our sorrow This loss is an irreparable loss and this affliction not one lightly to pass away We pray you not to remove us from your heart and to make (good) mention of us before Allah ”

Though the Holy Prophet had a grave disposition and was sedate in his talk, always full of deep thought and busy with his many onerous duties, night and day, yet he talked freely with those around him on whatever subject was broached as if he were quite one of them He never

put on a sanctimonious air of aloofness nor condemned all innocent amusement and play. He approved of the young men riding horses in races and of practising the shooting of arrows. He advised them to take plenty of bodily exercise. He even at times indulged in a few harmless jokes, but his jokes were all true.

Once an old woman came to him and begged him to pray for her that she might be allowed to live in Paradise. 'No old woman can enter Paradise,' said the Holy Prophet. The woman began to cry. "Do not be distressed," said he, "old women will first be made young and then taken in."

Another old woman came up to him and begged she might be given a camel to ride on. 'Very well, I will give you the young of a camel,' 'O Prophet of Allah, of what use would be to me the young of a camel?' 'Dost thou not know that every camel is the young of a camel?'

A woman talking to him referred to her husband. 'Is not thy husband the man with white in his eye?' 'No, O Prophet of Allah! my husband has no such defect in his eye,' 'Dost thou not see that every human being has white in his eyes?'

Yet such was the decorum in his circle that none dared raise his voice above his voice and none spoke unless spoken to. Whenever a question was asked by him the invariable reply of his associates was 'God, and His Prophet know best.' Nevertheless on all important occasions he used to hold meetings and discuss matters fully and freely. Whenever he observed anything improper or unfitting said or done by any of his followers he never rebuked them direct, but, in his sermons he used to say "What do people think, or what is the matter with people who say or do such and such a thing," without mention-

ing any names and the party at fault would refrain from doing so in future

A certain young man came up to him and complained that he had become a slave to three bad habits viz, debauchery, drunkenness and speaking lies. He said he could not shake off all the three and asked his advice which one of them he should give up. The Holy Prophet replied, "Give up telling lies." The young man thought it was very easy and began to avoid telling lies taking a vow to that effect, but when he reflected that when he should appear before the Holy Prophet next time and he should ask him if he had drunk wine he could not tell him a lie being under a vow. So he gave up drink and when he gave it up, his debauchery also left him.

Another person complained to the Holy Prophet that his neighbour had been ill treating and tyrannising over him. He advised him to bear it patiently. He went away but came back a few days later with the same complaint. The Holy Prophet again recommended patience. But once again the man came up to him and said that his neighbour had not improved. Then the Holy Prophet advised him to take out all his belongings from his house and laying them on the road side to sit there, and if any passer by should ask him why he did so to reply that owing to the ill treatment of his neighbour he was going to live in the street, leaving his house. The man did as he was bid. As every passer by heard the man's story remarked, 'Cursed be the man who torments his neighbour,' the neighbour heard it and being afraid of the many curses of the passers by, came up to him and besought him to forgive and forget. The neighbours then lived peaceably ever afterwards.

A beggar came to the Holy Prophet and asked alms of him. He was given some money. The next day he appeared again and was given some more alms, when on the third day he came

again and begged, the Holy Prophet either gave him an axe or bade him buy one, selling everything he had and advised him to go into the forest, fell wood and thus live on his own earning rather than on the charity of others

The Holy Prophet once met a party of men who were singing and dancing and otherwise making merry. "Have you all rendered up your account to Allah and have you been adjudged fit to inherit the Paradise?" asked he. "Oh no, Prophet of God, we have not done that yet." "Does it befit you then to make merry with such a reckoning yet to render?" These simple words wrought such a change in them that every one of them became a saint in time.

A party of young poets from a tribe which prided on the purity and elegance of their language once came to the Holy Prophet and objected to three words in the Holy Qoran as rather inelegant and asked him why such words were found in a book which claimed to be a model of elegance. The words referred to were 'Kabaiun', 'atattckhuzuni', and 'Huzuwa' meaning 'very old', 'do you hold me', and 'sport', respectively. The Holy Prophet looked at them and said, "You are all young men, come back to me with your old chief and I will give you a reply." They came again with their chief who was a very old man, with hoary head and long flowing beard. When he appeared and saluted the Holy Prophet, he bade him sit down, but just as he was about to sit, the Holy Prophet pointed to another place and bade him sit there. When the old man was going to sit down there he was again asked to sit down at a third place. This aroused the spirits of the old man and he cried out, "Ana Sheikhu kabaiun atattckhuzuni huzuwa", which translated means, "I am a very old Sheik, do you hold me in sport, or make sport of me?" The Holy Prophet there-upon told the party that their own old chief had answered their objection for he had used the three identical words to which exception had been taken.

One day as the Holy Prophet lay asleep in the shade of a tree a pagan Arab came up to him and drew his sword from the sheath. The Holy Prophet awoke. The Arab raised his naked sword to smite him and asked, "Who can save thee from me now?" "Allah" was the prompt reply. As soon as the sacred word passed his lips a tremor seized the Arab, he shook from head to foot and let fall his sword on the ground. It was at once picked up by the Holy Prophet who raised it aloft and in his turn asked him the same question. The Arab begged for mercy. The Holy Prophet said "I never retaliate take thy sword and go in peace"

There was an athlete of the name of Rukana, who was noted for his strength. He used to spread a camel's hide on the ground and standing or sitting on it used to challenge eight strong men to dig off the hide from under him. They used to try with their joint strength but could never succeed in dislodging it only the hide would be torn in pieces. One day he went up to the Holy Prophet and challenged him that he would become a Muslim if the Holy Prophet could only overthrow him in personal combat. The challenge was accepted. When Rukana advanced to attack him, the Holy Prophet seized him with one hand and lifting him up from the ground threw him to a distance. Thrice he attacked and thrice was he thrown off. He declared himself beaten and became a Muslim.

The life of this unique personage is so full of extraordinary incidents, so instructive, so exemplary that one likes to talk and write about him as long as one can. He commenced life as an orphan tending his uncle's sheep, then he turned a merchant from a lone bachelor he became a man of family, from being poor he became rich, from being a private citizen he became the supreme head of a state and as such he had to turn a soldier and a warrior, he suffered a few defeats but gained more victories. He was a law-giver an administrator, and a wise politician. Above all he was

the spiritual guide of the whole of Arabia. In every capacity he will be found to be an exemplar to humanity. His private life was of the most excellent pattern. He never spoke a lie nor broke a promise in his whole life and was sui-named "Al Amin" 'The Truthful and Trustworthy'. He was a devoted husband, a fond parent and loving helpful relation. As a prophet he met with such success as had never been before him gained by any other. As a general he laid down rules of war, wise and humane doing away with all barbarity and tyranny, of his law a Christian eminent lawyer says that the Muhammadan civil law is the most just and most equitable law on the face of the earth. He never made any war of aggression nor ever broke a treaty. He treated the prisoners of war as if they were his honoured guests. He never put to death a single man, woman or child, for not accepting his religion. He treated the conquered people with toleration and kindness leaving them free to exercise their own religion and giving them equal rights with the Muslims on submission and payment of a small tribute. This tax called the *Jezia* has been much maligned by his enemies because they have misunderstood it.

The *Jezia* It was not imposed for the right of exercising one's religion as supposed wrongly by some. It was a tax for exemption of non Muslims from rendering military service to the state and for granting to them equal rights with the Muslims and for the protection of life and property guaranteed by the state. It was a very light tax imposed only on able bodied fighting men. All females, children, old men and the poor were exempt from it. He raised the status of women which was most degraded in those times to that of men, conferring upon them legal and civic rights such as had never been given before by any other nation. He abolished drink and all kinds of intoxicants. He put a stop to female infanticide which prevailed in the country. He prohibited all gambling and games of chance as also the taking of usury. He laid down such wise laws regarding slavery, divorce and polygamy as would eventually put a stop to those evils. He made it incumbent upon his followers to set apart every

year a portion of their worldly substance to be distributed amongst the poor. He enjoined brotherly love to all men no matter to what nationality or religion they belonged. He preached that all men, black, brown yellow or white were equal no one was superior to the other. Only those were superior who were the most pious servants of God. He inculcated kindness and compassion towards the dumb creatures, the animals. He enjoined obedience to parents love towards wives and affection for the young. "Paradise lies under the feet of your mothers" said he and "He who displeases his father displeases God." He also said, "Look upon women with compassion and love, not with the eye of lust." The punishment of adultery in Islam is death by stoning. "Feed your slaves," said he "with what you yourself eat and clothe them with what you wear." Having all the treasures of the world at his command he led the life of an ascetic. He lived in a hut made of date palm leaves ate the coarsest food and of that never a belly full. Looking from any point of view he stands out unique, and an exemplar to all men. He never preached any precept which he did not practise to perfection. It is no exaggeration to say that no man was ever born in the world, whose life contains so much incident and who has done so much good to the world as the Holy Prophet Hazrath Muhammad (God's peace and blessings on him!)

CHAPTER XVI

It is a grievous error to judge of prophets of Allah by the standard of worldly common men. It would be like judging kings and emperors with grooms and scullions. Though the prophets belonged to the human race yet by their superior wisdom and virtue and the training they received from on high they have surpassed the angels. They have become like rubies and diamonds amongst pebbles. Worldly men devote all their energies to attaining wealth and position in life. Some of them are for eating and drinking and enjoying life as much as they can, whilst a few strive to acquire

On Prophets
in General

wordly fame In fact all their efforts are for themselves But the aim of prophets is far different They live to serve Allah and His creatures, self being the last item of consideration with them They are born of the noblest families and Allah takes special care of their morals In fact they are under training by Allah This is the reason why prophets have generally no human teachers, nor do they waste their time in acquiring worldly knowledge or such knowledge as can be of no use to them in discharging their peculiar function that is curing the souls of men and guiding them to Allah's door steps The Holy Prophet Hazrath Muhammad (peace and blessings on him!) prayed to Allah "Oh Allah, spare me such learning and knowledge as can be of no use to me" Whilst all men try their utmost to amass as much wealth as they can lay hands on, prophets shun it like poison If ever they chance to come in lawful possession of gold and silver they get rid of it as soon as they can by spending it in the service of Allah All human beings are a mixture of good and evil, both forming essential components of human nature The best of men have some weakness or other and the worst human being has some good trait in his character But the case of Allah's prophets is quite different Allah creates them of a stuff in which good preponderates If there should be any undesirable traits in them, the training they are subjected to under Divine supervision changes their frailties into virtues Pride is substituted by humility, avarice by contentment, anger by patience, vengeance by forgiveness, niggardliness by charity, lust by love, cowardice by courage and so on When by long probation frequent chastening and guidance from Allah they become super men, shorn of all human evil propensities and endowed with all virtues, they are considered fit to guide other men and to become a model to them Then the veil which covers futurity is partially raised before their mental vision and they are made prophets of God On account of the hidden secrets of the future being disclosed to them, their view of life and things in general is completely changed They care not in the least if one day they are made monarchs of the world and the other the most destitute of

men The love of Allah fills their hearts They live in the world like real travellers in an inn They build no palaces nor lay by any stores They soon grow tired of this ephemeral world and long to shift themselves into the eternal abodes of bliss with the Companion on High As long as they live they never let a moment pass but in communion with their Creator Such is an outline of the character and lives of prophets of Allah in general

Of the Holy Prophet Hazrath Muhammad (God's peace and blessings on him¹) in particular who dare under take to do justice to his portrait ?
 On the Holy Prophet in particular Nay, who can understand him thoroughly but the Creator who sent him into the world ?
 Only a doctor can well understand another doctor, so only a prophet can understand another prophet Failing that at least those who have some knowledge and experience of religion and spiritual matters can know just enough of him to admire and venerate him There can be no greater praise bestowed upon a human being than that the Almighty Allah Himself should have praised him in words of approbation (Vide Chapter XIX Infra)

In this noble person were combined all the virtues and excellences of all the other prophets We know of no other prophet of Allah whose life-history is so well known and of whose actions and sayings such detailed authentic records exist, nor do we find any other heavenly book except the one revealed to this prince of prophets kept in tact untampered with and the purity of which has been so zealously guarded He has had experience of almost every phase of human life and came out a model in each It can truly be said of him that "he left nothing untouched and touched nothing which he did not rectify and improve" The Holy Book revealed to him contains guidance for all men for all times His life has been eulogised by Allah as a model to be followed by every human being His European Christian biographers not

knowing anything about his spiritual excellence and with all their bias and prejudice against him are obliged to offer their quota of his well deserved praise and admire him as the best man ever born. His solitary and prolonged visits to the cave on Mount Hira for fifteen long years were not for nothing. He did not go there for such a length of time simply to gaze at the mountain-tops or loiter about on the hills. It was his school as it were, where he was being trained for the grand office he was destined to fill. And then looking at his life one can have no hesitation in saying that a life so momentous and so full of incident and action was not given to any other prophet. As a prophet, as a preacher, as a sovereign, as a legislator, as a military general, as a politician, as a citizen, as a familyman, as a reformer, as a self reliant worker, as a friend of the poor and the needy, in fact viewed in any capacity you will find him unique whose equal the world has never seen. Rejoice therefore, ye Muslims, that Allah has given you such a wise and merciful master and try to obey his orders to the best of your power. Know that the love of Allah and His prophet is the key to your salvation. It is to be feared that the Muslim young men of the present day, those who have had an English education more especially know very little about Allah and His prophet. They were not instructed in religion and what little they know of Islam comes through Christian channels.

It is recorded that the Holy Prophet was once sitting in an open place with a black turban on his head. The full moon was shining in the sky over head. The black turban by contrast set off his white face to the best advantage and he looked very beautiful. Hazrath Abu Bekr chanced to come and admiring him said, "Oh Prophet of Allah, what a noble lovely face has Allah given you in addition to your various attractions. I find the full moon wane before the lustre of your refulgent countenance." The Holy Prophet smiled and said, "You speak the truth." A little while afterwards Abu Jehl, his bitterest enemy came up and said, "What an ugly repulsive countenance has God;

The Holy
Prophet's
face a mirror

given you amongst our noble tribe of the Qoreish that I am ashamed to look at you, and own you as one of our tribe " The Holy Prophet again smiled and replied, "You speak the truth" Those that waited upon him at the time afterwards asked him how both of them could have spoken the truth their statements being contradictory He replied "Indeed both did speak the truth My face is like a mirror The beholder sees his own soul reflected therein Abu Bekr saw his own pure soul and it was fair, Abu Jehl also saw his own soul and it was foul and ugly Both spoke what they saw and both spoke the truth" This incident is mentioned to show

All opinions of the European Christian biographers of the Holy Prophet not to be accepted as solid truth or sound

that much depends on the spirit in which a person and his actions are looked upon and to warn readers against accepting the statements and opinions of European Christian writers about the Holy Prophet, as the solid truth, for the following reasons In the first place

Allah in His wisdom distributed His various gifts amongst His creatures as He thought fit To some He gave worldly wisdom, to some bodily strength, to some wealth and so on The gift of religion and spirituality has been conferred upon the Asiatics "Go to the Easterners to

All the great teachers of religion were Asiatics

learn wisdom," is a saying in English Perhaps the temperate climate of their zone is a factor in developing the higher powers of the human spirit All the great teachers of

religion were Asiatics Europeans may excel Asiatics in mechanical skill and industries but certainly not in religion, for they do not possess the true religion themselves How then can the blind lead the blind? The religion taught by Jesus (peace on him!) did indeed reach Europe but passing through a Pagan channel imbibed so much of Pagan sentiment and assimilated so many Pagan rites and ceremonials that it no longer remained the religion taught by him A fair and beautiful Georgian maid fell into the

A fair maid of Georgia

hands of a Red Indian tribe They adopted her and intending to still more beautify her according to their taste, they cut off her long silken hair, they pressed down her beautiful Roman nose

to flatten it, they bored holes in her ears and put large brass rings in them, then they dyed her teeth black and painted her face and body with ochre and stripping her of her decent clothing decked her in their own fashion with leaves, shells and cowries. The result was that from being a very beautiful girl she became a hideous monster of ugliness. The pure monotheistic religion preached by Jesus (peace on him !) has suffered a similar transformation. St Paul introduced into it the novel theories that the death of Christ (peace on him ,) on the Cross absolves all sinners who believe in his death in that manner, that faith alone ensures salvation and that the observers of God's law are cursed. Then the Doctrine of Trinity was imported from Egypt, the land of Trinities, a doctrine which no human being can either understand himself or explain to others. God is said to consist of three parts each one of them being God himself, independently of the other two, yet strange to say, still retaining His unity, all three being one. Jesus (peace on him !) himself never taught these doctrines. He never preached Trinity nor did he curse the followers of God's law, on the contrary he said that God is One, the common Father and Creator of all, vide the Lord's Prayer and that salvation could be had only by following God's Commandments, (St Matthew 19 17) then Constantine who turned a Christian for political reasons but continued a Pagan at heart, in order to popularise Christianity incorporated into it almost all the rituals of Pagan Sun-worship merely substituting the name of Christ (peace on him !) for that of the Pagan god. Later on a mother of God was added in imitation of an Egyptian goddess. This subject has been fully discussed in the "Sources of Christianity" published by the late Khaja Kamaluddin which is recommended to every Christian reader. What the writer means to point out here is that Christians, having made a muddle of their own religion, are not competent to teach religion to others.

CHAPTER XVII

As the Holy Prophet pointed out all these errors and invited the Christians to revert to the worship of the One

True God as He was worshipped by Haziaths Abraham, Isaac, Moses, Jesus and all the other prophets (peace on them all!) they turned hostile to him and finding no fault in him nor any flaw in the religion taught by him, began to fabricate false stories to malign him. How absurd and foolish were these inventions! Christian biographers start with the assumption that he was no prophet of God, and try to convince readers of their books that at the best he can be said to have committed a 'pious fraud' which is an absurd and meaningless phrase. They give no reason for this their arbitrary assumption. The chief reason why Christian priests are so hostile and prejudiced against the Holy Prophet appears to the writer to be identical with that which made the Qoreish his enemies at first. These later were idol worshippers, and subsisted on the gifts and offerings made to them by common people. By condemning idolatry the Holy Prophet took away their wages of sin from them. Similarly the Christians had their Pope

The supposed powers of Pope

who was supposed to have the power to absolve sinners, to condone transgressions of the law, to grant indulgences to persons who wish to do something against the law, all on paying appropriate price. Nay, dispensation could be bought from him and his subordinates to exempt sinners from the tortures of Purgatory. In short he assumed divine powers, leaving very little for Providence to do on the day of Judgment. Then a vast number of his prelates, cardinals, bishops, monks, friars, priests, nuns and mendicants, depended for their livelihood on the donations of the credulous ignorant people. Islam would do away with the whole hierarchy of them, and would deprive them of their gratuitous fat livings. Hence their animosity to Islam. In as much as the pure rational tenets of Islam are such as appeal to the common sense and reason of every individual which the inexplicable dogmas of their own faith do not, the danger was a great menace to Christianity and the apprehension of Christian priests was extreme. They therefore tried their best to misrepresent Islam and calumniate the Holy Prophet by circulating false stories, — childish trash — against him so as to

dissuade people from studying it in earnest and creating an aversion in their minds by their silly lies. It seems to have been the guiding rule of their action to throw as much mud as possible hoping that some of it would surely stick. In this nefarious attempt they have partly succeeded. Even well read men like Sale, Prideaux, Pocock, Muir and others have allowed prejudice to overcome their reason and unhinge judgment. Nothing blinds men more than prejudice and bigotry and unless a seeker after truth discards them both he cannot hit upon it. But truth will outlive calumny and will assert its supremacy at last. People have begun to study Islam in earnest and without bias and many of such men have adopted it openly and many more in secret. An exposition of the Christian religion as it now stands and a comparison with Islam will be made later. Here the object of the writer is to show that Christians with their erroneous notions about God and His Prophets with ignorance of Islam and inveterate bias against it super added are not competent to write impartial biographies of the Holy Prophet. If a bigoted Jew were to write a life of Jesus and His mother (peace on them both!) what would you expect therein but false accusations, mincing of matters, misrepresentations of facts and motives, in short all sorts of perversion of the truth. That is exactly what most of the Christian biographers of the Holy Prophet have attempted to do, especially the earlier of them. To sum up, European Christians are not competent to write a fair life of the Holy Prophet for the following reasons

- (1) They are not a spiritualistic people, most of them being materialists and floundering in the quagmire of doubt and scepticism, whether there is a God, or not and whether there is or there is not a life after death for mankind. They thus ignore the entire heavenly phase of the Holy Prophet's doings, dismissing it as super natural and incredible and thus they ignore the major and the best portion of his life.

Why European Christians are not competent to judge of Islam and its Holy Prophet

(2) Not understanding the status and position of prophets, they judge them like ordinary men of the world, and fall into grievous errors by mistaking the motives of a prophet for any action he does

(3) Not having studied Islam properly in the spirit in which it should be studied and not grasping it fully, they imagine what they do not understand and let their imaginations run riot over it and try to criticise and condemn what their own imagination suggested to them as real facts or in other words fight battles of their own creation and think they have criticised Islam

(4) Their priests have filled their ears with such falls and foolish stories about the Holy Prophet and the religion he preached that they are thoroughly saturated with prejudice and start with the unwarranted assumption that he was not a Prophet of God but only an impostor or at the best a 'pious fraud,' their own so called scriptures abounding in interpolations, forgeries and pious frauds, as admitted by their own critics

(5) If by chance some of them were to hit upon the truth and be convinced of the truth of the Holy Prophet's mission and of the Holy Qoran being a Divine Revelation as it claims to be they dare not make their conviction public for fear of being ostracized from their community and losing their position and worldly wealth. It is said that when Carlyle first wrote his essay on the Holy Prophet the priests and other Christians raised such a hubbub against him that he was obliged to omit certain portions and recast others

For these and other equally cogent reasons you can never expect a fair and impartial Life of the Holy Prophet to be written by a Christian

Then how are we to know about him if not by reading his Life you may ask and the question is pertinent. The reply is study the Holy Qoran carefully and

study lives written by those who lived during his time or shortly after it, and by men who profited themselves by his teachings. If a layman who knew nothing about medicine and surgery were to write the life of an eminent physician and surgeon and omit all the wonderful cures he effected and the subtle operations he performed and merely confine himself to detail his ordinary acts such as his eating, drinking, playing at games and sleeping etc., of what use can such a life be to the reader? But if the life were written by a patient who lived with the doctor being under his treatment and mentioning the benefits he derived from the doctor's prescriptions and also detailing the treatment the doctor adopted in the case of other patients with the benefit derived by them and explaining the various wonderful surgical operations he performed and how he restored his patients to health, then such a life would be invaluable as a guide to other doctors and would give the reader an idea of the eminent doctor's capacity and learning.

Read therefore the Holy Prophet's life written by Muslim historians and biographers who lived about his time in Arabia. If you do not know the Arabic language there are translations available in Persian and Urdu. But never read a life written by a Christian unless you are familiar with the real life of the Holy Prophet and you are able to expose the mistakes, misrepresentations and chicanery of the Christian biographers. Christians having no true knowledge of God, nor of spiritual matters make sad mistakes. Their attempt to write about an eminently spiritual prophet of Allah is like the attempt of a purblind person to write a treatise on Chromatics. Being either really ignorant of the spiritual or heavenly aspect of the Holy Prophet's actions or willfully ignoring it, they confine themselves merely to their outward aspect and attribute all sorts of mean and unworthy motives to him as their own minds suggest. Muslims who know the real facts smile commiseratingly at their clumsy mistakes or become indignant as circumstances demand. It is sufficient to point out here the unprecedented supremacy the Holy

Prophet Hazrath Muhammad (God's peace and blessing on him,) has attained He is without a doubt the prince of all Allah's prophets having accomplished what no other Prophet was able to do He not only disclosed to those who believe in him, the true reason why Man was created and gave them such maxims as aid and guide them in fulfilling the object of his creation but also proved to them by his own personal example to what moral and spiritual altitude a human being can rise by following his precepts All the world is loud in singing his praises,

While leading a life over burdened with multifarious duties of momentous import, his worship and remembrance of Allah was marvellous Whilst all Muslims prayed five times a day, he prayed eight times and even oftener With each intaking and out coming breath he breathed the holy name of Allah His sleep during the night was of the shortest, never more than three or four hours, and that at intervals, and not at one stretch He used to stand up so long reciting the Holy Qoran in his Namaz before Allah that his sacred feet became swollen Whilst all Muslims fasted for one month during the twelve he fasted nearly for six months He prayed and pleaded with the Almighty for his followers and those that believed in him so perseveringly that Allah Himself has said "There has come to you an Apostle from amongst yourselves, hard for him to bear is it that ye commit iniquity, he is anxious over you, after the believers pitiful compassionate" (The Holy Qoran 9 129)

How foolish and presumptuous on the part of men unworthy to dust his shoes to pose as his judges, and make all sorts of foolish remarks about him casting vile aspersions, unfounded stigmas, sneering innuendoes which only serve to show their own meanness of heart! This last and the greatest of the prophets of Allah was sent into the world to teach mankind the Unity and Power of Allah and to uplift humanity He worked single handed and with opposition on all sides, but eventually succeeded

in thoroughly accomplishing the purpose for which he was sent. Before he left the world not an idol nor an idol-worshipper remained in his country. As many as 140,000 men of his nation bore testimony to his having fulfilled his mission and then he sought his Companion on High. The foolish Jews did not understand Jesus and his mother Mary (peace on them both!) and calumniated them to their heart's content. They started with the preconceived notion that Jesus (peace on him!) was not a prophet but only an Impostor, (St Matthew 27 63), they misjudged every action of his and ended by handing him over to be crucified. But with all their calumnies they could do him no real harm, for God has praised him and his mother in the Holy Qoran. Now the Christians, at least the earlier and most bigoted of them, have trodden the same path with regard to the Holy Prophet. They started with the assumption that he was no prophet of God. Strange perversion of intellect! What grounds they have for making this arbitrary assumption is not known. The Impostor, the False Prophet and Forger are the appellations they bestow on him in the very beginning and to prove their assumption correct, they resort to manufacture lying tales, to misquote from the Holy Qoran and to expound far fetched untenable theories regarding him. If a story is given in the Holy Qoran which is also given in the Jewish or Christian Books these hostile critics jump up and at once cry out, 'Lo! here is obvious plagiarism! He has borrowed it from our Books.' If he displays a deep and perfect knowledge of Jewish law and other matters he must have learnt it from some one. Who this some one was nobody knows. If he speaks of the Christian religion he must have learnt it from some Christian when he visited Syria when yet a child. Such is the strange mentality that blinds these Christians,

Unwarranted
hostility of
the Christians
towards
the Holy
Prophet

Their logic is curious, and something like the following. There are bunches of grapes hanging in A's vineyard

but some bunches are also found in the house of B B must have therefore stolen them from A's vineyard In their haste to find fault they overlook the colour of the grapes Whereas those in the vineyard are black, those with B are white If these critics had the patience to compare the stories given in their Scriptures and those related in the Holy Qoran, they would have found that the Holy Qoran had not merely *adopted* them but that in every instance the stories have been corrected, their absurdities pointed out and the true version given How could a wrong story be corrected but by repeating it? Several examples of such corrections are given below and the reader will judge for himself which of the versions is more in consonance with reason and compatible with common sense, the Biblical or the Qoranic

I About the Creation of the World

Different ver
sions of the
same anecd
otes in the
Bible and the
Holy Qoran
compared

Biblical Account

"And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made and he *rested* on the seventh day from all his work which he had made "

Genesis Ch 2 verse 2

The Holy Qoran

"And We created the heavens and the earth and what is between them in six periods and there touched us not any fatigue therefore be patient of what they say and celebrate the praises of thy Lord &c "

The Qoran Ch 50 38-39

Remarks

The writer of the Genesis makes of Allah an anthropomorphic god with all the frailties of a human being His needing rest after six days' work implies fatigue

Now, what is fatigue? It is weariness brought on by the exhaustion of power, due to its over exertion, bodily or mental. This is peculiarly an attribute of all created beings whose powers are *limited*. To impute this frailty to a Being whose power is *unlimited* is an egregious error. The Holy Qoran therefore rightly rectifies this grave misconception. There is another error in the Bible account. Allah is said to have created the world in six *days*. The Holy Qoran makes it six *periods*. The former is opposed to the revelations of science. The latter is fully borne out by them. If it be said that the days of the Bible may also mean periods, verse 5 of chapter 1 of the same book negatives this interpretation. It runs thus

‘ And God called the light day and the darkness he called night. And the evening and the morning were the first *day* ’

Hence we are obliged to assume that the days referred to were the same days as we see now.

II Regarding Adam and Eve (peace on them both ') and the forbidden tree

The Biblical Narrative

“ And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it, for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die ”

(Genesis 2 16-17)

“ And unto Adam he said, because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it, cursed is the ground for thy sake, in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life ”

(Genesis 3 17).

“ And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil, and now lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat and live for ever therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken So he drove out the man, and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life ”

(Genesis 3 22-24)

The Qoranic version

“ And we said, “ O Adam dwell, thou and thy wife in Paradise and eat therefrom amply as you wish, but do not draw near this tree or ye will be of the unjust ” And Satan made them backslide therefrom and drove them out from what they were in, and we said ‘ Go down one of you the enemy of the other, and in the earth there is an abode and a provision for a time ” And Adam caught certain words from his Lord and He turned towards him for He is the compassionate one easily turned We said, ‘ Go down therefrom altogether and haply there may come from me a guidance, and whoso follows my guidance, no fear is theirs, nor shall they grieve But those who misbelieve and call our signs lies, they are the fellows of the Fire they shall dwell therein for aye ”

(The Holy Qoran 2 34-39)

Remarks

The reader will note how crude is the account of the Bible and how several expressions have been used regarding the Almighty not at all worthy to be applied to His Sacred Majesty In the first place He, the fountain of All Truth is made to speak an untruth to Adam (peace on him!) “ For in the day thou eatest thereof (the tree of knowledge) thou shalt surely die ” Well he did eat of it but he did not die on the day he ate of it, on the

other hand he lived for nine hundred and thirty years afterwards (Genesis 5 5) Can the Lord stoop to using untrue and vain threats ! Then if the forbidden tree had been the tree of mortality, the matter would be conceivable, how could Adam (peace on him !) *die* by obtaining knowledge of good and evil ? Did the Lord wish him and Eve to continue ignorant boobies and naked savages all their life time, that He was so wrath on their acquiring knowledge ? Again the Lord God of Justice is said to have cursed the earth and all upon it and destroyed them because Adam (peace on him !) disobeyed Him Can it be believed that the Just and Merciful God destroyed all life under the heavens because Adam (peace on him !) ate an apple, especially as a short time ago He had blessed them all ? Is not this representing Him as an arbitrary cruel tyrant ?

Further Allah is reported to have said Behold the man is become as one of *us* to know good and evil ' Who are the '*us*' referred to ? Does not the word convey the idea that there existed several gods, or at least, coeval beings sharing knowledge with Him in common measure ? Is not the idea pagan in its origin, the pagans believing in a plurality of gods ? Nor is the difficulty obviated by supposing that angels are meant by the pronoun '*us*' for what knowledge do angels possess excepting what Allah Himself has bestowed upon them and can they by any stretch of imagination be considered fit to be coupled with the Omniscient Allah in sharing knowledge with Him in common measure ?

Then Allah is said to have been struck with an idea " lest man put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat and live for ever " What a poor conception of the attributes of the Almighty Creator of the Universe ! A new idea strikes Him and to repair His previous neglect or oversight He places a guard over the tree of life ! The Almighty Designer of this vast Universe with its myriads of suns, moons and stars, could not foresee what His Creature Adam (peace on him !) could or could not do !

And finally Allah is said to have driven out Adam (peace on Him!), whom He had created in His Own image and had blessed a short time ago, from the garden as if he were a pest just as any farmer would drive out a mischievous weasel or a thieving fox from his farm

Throughout the whole narrative no mention is made whatever of Allah's Infinite Mercy towards His creatures

Compare this narrative with that given in the Holy Quran quoted above. How simple natural and consistent it is! No false threats on the part of Allah no driving out of Adam (peace on him!) no general cursing of the earth and all the creatures living upon it for the fault of one individual, nor even a word of censure to Adam (peace on him!). Allah orders him to refrain from eating of a certain tree, warning him that if he should eat of it, he would be of the unjust that is unjust towards himself, as his eating of it would entail his removal from the heavenly garden his living upon earth for a time with all the ills, the toil and trouble incidental to it and the subsequent death of his body. But in spite of this warning Adam (peace on him) however did eat of the tree. The Holy Quran elsewhere affirms that his eating of it was due to *forgetfulness* and not to *wilful disobedience* vide verse 114 chapter XX. The Merciful Allah thereupon pities him and teaches him how to ask pardon for his fault and to invoke Allah's mercy, which he does and is forgiven. The Compassionate Allah further to solace him for his removal from the garden graciously says that though I remove thee from My vicinity yet will I not completely forsake thee. Instead I have made due provision on earth for the comfortable living of thee and thine and I will send my guidance to you all through my angels, prophets and books, which if you obey and follow you will not come to grief. How consistent with Allah's Infinite Mercy and grace is His treatment of Adam (peace on him.) Is this adopting the Bible story or correcting it?

III. Regarding the Great Deluge

The Biblical Account

“And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man, and beast and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air, for it repenteth me that I have made them.”

(Genesis 6 6-7)

“And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven, and every thing that is in the earth shall die.

But with thee will I establish my covenant, and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee.

And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee, they shall be male and female.

Of fowls after their kind, and of cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the earth after his kind, two of every sort shall come unto thee, to keep them alive.

And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, and thou shalt gather it to thee, and it shall be for food for thee, and for them.

Thus did Noah, according to all that God commanded him, so did he.”

(Genesis 6 17-22)

“ In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up and the windows of heaven were opened

And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights ”

(Genesis 7 11 12)

‘ And it came to pass in the six hundredth and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month the waters were dried up from off the earth and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and, behold, the face of the ground was dry

And in the second month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, was the earth dried ”

(Genesis 8 13-14)

“ And Noah went forth, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him

Every beast, every creeping thing, and every fowl, and whatsoever creepeth upon the earth, after their kinds, went forth out of the ark ”

(Genesis 8 18 19)

The Qoranic Account

‘ We did send Noah unto his people, ‘ Verily, I am to you an obvious warner , that ye should not worship any save God ‘ Verily, I fear for you the torment of the grievous day ’ . But the chiefs of those who misbelieved amongst his people said, ‘ We only see in thee a mortal like ourselves , nor do we see that any follow thee except the reprobates amongst us by a rash judgment , nor do we see that you have any preference over us , nay more we think you liar ! ’ ’ He said, ***** ‘ O my people ! I do not ask you for wealth in return for it , my hire is only from God , nor do I repulse those who believe , verily, they shall meet their Lord ‘ But I see you, a people who

are ignorant' ***** They said, 'O Noah! thou hast wrangled with us, and hast multiplied wranglings with us, bring us then what thou hast threatened us with, if thou art of those who tell the truth' Said he, 'God will only bring it on you if He pleases, nor can ye make Him helpless, nor will my advice profit you, should I wish to advise you, if God wish to lead you into error He is Lord, and unto Him shall ye be returned' ***** And Noah was inspired, 'None shall surely believe amongst thy people but those who have believed already, take not then ill that which they do And make the ark under our eyes, and at our inspiration, and plead not with me for those who have done wrong, verily, they shall be drown-ed' So he made the ark, and every time chiefs of his people passed by him they jested at him Said he, 'If ye jest at us, verily we shall jest at you even as ye are jesting, and ye shall surely know, ***** Until at length when our order came, and the oven boiled, (Tanur, oven signifies also a reservoir of water, then it would mean the reservoir overflowed), we said, 'Load therein of every kind two, and likewise thy family—save those on whom the sentence has already been passed—likewise those who believe', but there believed not with him save a few And he said, 'Ride ye therein, in the name of God is its course, and its mooring Verily, my Lord is forgiving and merciful' And it floated on with them mid waves like mountains, ***** And it was said, 'O earth! swallow down thy water! and, 'O heaven! hold!' and the water abated, and the affair was decided, and it settled on Judi, and it was said, 'Away with the people who are evildoers', ***** It was said, 'O Noah! descend in safety from us, and blessings upon thee and upon (some) nations of those who are with thee, but (some) nations we will allow to enjoy prosperity and then there shall touch them from us grievous woe' "

(The Holy Qoran II 25-50)

Remarks

It is obvious that the Biblical narrative bristles with impossibilities and inaccuracies To say that God *repented*

and *grieved* in His mind for having created man clearly points to the direst ignorance on the part of the narrator of the sublime attributes of the Almighty Omniscient Lord. Repentance implies short sightedness and grief helplessness both peculiarly human frailties. Such expressions regarding Allah sound in Muslim ears nothing short of blasphemous. The writer of the Genesis brings down the Almighty Lord to the level of a thoughtless mortal, committing blunders and then repenting of them and grieving over them. Nay he makes Him take a walk in the cool of the garden to refresh Himself under the shade of trees, (Genesis 3:8). Did the Almighty Lord take walks to re invigorate Himself after his enervation from the oppressive heat of the sun? God forbid that such crass ideas enter the mind of any Muslim. We Muslims do not believe that Moses (peace on him¹) was the writer of the Pentateuch — and for the matter of that, even Christian critics themselves do not believe so — for how could he have written about his own death and burial? (Deut. 34:5-6). The action of Allah in destroying the brutes, beasts, fowls reptiles aye all in whom there was breath of life, for the fault of Adam (peace on him¹) is equally difficult to understand and reconcile with Allah's strict justice. These poor animals, whom Allah had blessed a little while ago, committed no fault, why then were they destroyed? Is not this making of All-Merciful Allah a cruel arbitrary tyrant, subject to uncontrollable fits of passion?

Then imagine the vast number of animals Noah (peace on him¹) had to accommodate in his ark, three hundred cubits long, fifty cubits wide and thirty cubits high with but one window in it! Where did he lodge the mammoth elephants, the rhinoceroses, the giraffes, the buffaloes, the horses, the cattle, in fact all the animals on the earth, together with all the fowls of the air and all creeping things several pairs of all clean and all unclean animals? And wherein was deposited the food and fodder for all these to last for about a year? On what were the carnivorous animals fed during all the time? Why, even

fifty such arks could not have sufficed for this vast menagerie and its food supply. Then if the mere destruction of life had been the object of the deluge, where was the necessity to coop up all the men and the animals within an ark for one whole year. A couple of days, at the most, a week would have quite sufficed to accomplish the desired object. If the whole earth had been submerged under water for one whole year, with water reaching to fifteen cubits over and above the mountain tops, of which general submersion however the geologists and scientists affirm there is not the slightest mark or trace to be found anywhere, all trees and vegetation also must have perished. But we find them in luxuriant plenty now. Did Allah make a second creation of them after the flood? If so why does the Book make no mention of this second creation? In short the story is such that not even a child ten year old would believe in. It is a matter of wonder to Muslims how the intelligent European Christians believe in a book containing such stories as written under inspiration from God.

Now compare the account as given in the Holy Quran, How simple and free from absurdities it is, God sent Noah (peace on him!) to preach His Unity to an idolatrous nation. After long years of labour on his part, only a very few poor people believed in him. Allah resolved to destroy that nation as incorrigible and inundated the valley in which they dwelt, Noah embarking on an ark he had built under Divine direction together with his family and those few men the believers taking with him a pair of the necessary household animals such as cows, sheep, ponies and fowls. No general submersion of the terrestrial globe nor inundation lasting for a year.

Is this adopting the Bible story or correcting it?

IV Regarding the appearance of the Lord and angels to Abraham and Lot (peace on them!)

Biblical Account

“And the LORD appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day,

And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground, And said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree

And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts after that ye shall pass on for therefore are ye come to your servant And they said, So do as thou hast said And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth

And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetch a calf tender and good, and gave it unto a young man, and he hasted to dress it

And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them, and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat "

(Genesis 18 1-8)

' And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom but Abraham stood yet before the LORD "

(Genesis 18 22)

" And there came two angels to Sodom at even, and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom and Lot seeing them rose up to meet them, and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground

And he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in I pray you, into your servant's house and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways And they said, Nay, but we will abide in the street all night And he pressed upon them greatly, and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house, and

he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat "

(Genesis 19, 1-3)

The Qoranic Account

" Our messengers did come to Abraham with glad tidings, they said, 'Peace!' He said, 'Peace be it!' nor did he delay to bring the roasted calf But when he saw that their hands reached not thereto, he could not understand them, and harboured fear of them They said, 'Fear not Verily, we are sent unto the people of Lot!'"

The Holy Qoran 11 72-73)

" And when our messengers came to Lot, he was grieved for them, but his arm was straitened for them, and he said, 'This is a troublesome day!' And his people came to him, rushing at him, for before that they used to work evil **** (The angels) said, 'O Lot! verily, we are the messengers of thy Lord, they shall certainly not reach thee, then travel with thy people in the darkness of the night and let none of you look round except thy wife, verily, there shall befall her what befalls them Verily, their appointment is for the morning! and is not the morning nigh?'"

(The Holy Qoran 11 80-83)

Remarks

From the passages quoted from the Bible, it appears that the Lord appeared to Araham (peace on him!) accompanied by two angels all three in the shapes of men and became his guests and on food being set before them they all partook of it Then the two angles ate food placed before them by Lot (peace on him!) The Bible does not exclude Allah from the act of eating but says all three ate it! Further even supposing that only the two

angels ate food and not Allah, can the story be believed? Do angels eat human food? What gross ignorance of the nature of those spiritual beings — the angels!

Then look at the facts as mentioned in the Holy Qoran. There is no mention of Allah accompanying His angels to the tent of Abraham (peace on him!). It speaks only of His messengers going there. Then when food was placed before them and Abraham (peace on him!) observed that they were *not eating* it he grew afraid of them, as from their abstinence from food he guessed them rightly to be angels of God. The angels thereupon comforted him and bade him rejoice that Allah had sent good tidings through them to him that Sarah would beget a son.

Is this adopting the Bible narrative or correcting it?

With one more instance of the Holy Qoran correcting a grave misconception of the Christians and the Jews, this matter will be closed. This misconception is so grave and its correction so important that it behoves every Christian to sift the matter thoroughly and arrive at the truth, as it upsets the whole superstructure of the current Christian theory of Salvation, viz, the death of Christ (peace on him!) on the cross.

V. Regarding the supposed death of Jessu (peace on him!) on the Cross

The Biblical Account

“And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet. They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.”

(St Matthew 27 35)

“Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.”

And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, Lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

(St Matthew 27 45-46)

" Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost "

(St Matthew 27 50)

" And it was the third hour, and they crucified him "

(St Mark 15 25)

" And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, Lama sabachthani? which is being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?

(St Mark 15 34)

" And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost "

(St Mark 15 37)

" And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit and having said thus, he gave up the ghost "

(St Luke 23 46)

" When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost "

(St John 19 30)

The Qoranic Account

" And for their misbelief, and for their saying about Mary a mighty calumny, and for their saying, ' Verily, we have killed the Messiah, Jesus the son of Mary, the

apostle of God,' but they did not kill him, and they did not crucify him, but a similitude was made for them. And verily, those who differ about him are in doubt concerning him, they have no knowledge concerning him but only follow an opinion. They did not kill him, for sure ! nay, God raised him up unto Himself, for God is mighty and wise !"

(The Holy Qoran 4 155 157)

Remarks

The reader will observe that all the four Gospels differ from one another in almost every detail of what occurred at the time of the supposed death on the Cross of Jesus (peace on him !). This is by the bye. They all agree however in recording that he gave up the ghost on the Cross. The Holy Qoran emphatically denies it. It must be remembered that none of the four narrators excepting perhaps one and even that is doubtful, was an eye-witness of the incidents they relate. What they have written about a hundred years afterwards was written from hearsay. Then the discrepancies in the several narratives are so grave as to almost vitiate their authenticity. They differ in almost every detail. As to who bore the Cross to the place of execution, as to what Jesus (peace on him !) said on the Cross, as to what the two thieves, his fellow sufferers on the Cross said to him, as to what words he spoke before giving up the ghost, no two narrators agree. These are all vital points to judge where-with the truth of a narrative. Apart from these considerations what evidence is there to show that he *died* on the Cross. The late Khaja Kamaluddin has written in one of his books, 'The Sources of Christianity' that for the words translated as "he gave up the ghost" the original words in Syriac are 'he sighed with his breath'. This does not prove *death* on the Cross. Granting that Jesus (peace on him !) was actually nailed to the Cross, all the concomitant and subsequent circumstances completely negative his death upon it, rather than prove it. In the first place Jesus (peace on him !)

remained only three hours on the Cross from the sixth to the ninth hour, during which time darkness overspread the heavens. Now it is impossible that a man should die within that short time by simply being nailed to the Cross. Medical authorities affirm that death on the Cross is a very tardy process, sometimes so many as *nine days* intervening before death occurs. It is possible that he might have fainted and the onlookers mistaken him as dead, for to all outward appearance a man in a swoon is just like one dead. How appropriate is the language of the Holy Qoran "We made him resemble one dead." A careful perusal of the narratives given in the four Gospels discloses the following additional facts, viz ,

(1) Neither of the two men who had been crucified with him had died and their legs had to be broken

(2) The legs of Jesus (peace on him!) were not broken

(3) His side when pierced with a spear brought out blood, showing that circulation was still going on

(4) Pilate did not believe that he had died so soon (St Mark 15 44)

(5) He was not buried in the usual way. But two disciples of his, Joseph of Armathea and Nicodemus who were both rich and influential men besides being honorable members of the council lavished care upon the body wrapping it up in cloths containing large quantities of myrrh and aloes, both *stimulants* in their medicinal effect and carefully laid it in an airy and cool apartment especially excavated for the purpose

(6) The Gospel of St Matthew (28 11-15) speaks of the Elders of the Jews bribing the soldiers of the guard to say that his disciples had come in the night and removed the body, if the soldiers were amenable to bribery from the Jews what prevented them from taking bribes from

Joseph and Nicodemus, also of the Elders and rich and powerful besides, to allow them to remove the body soon after dark

(7) Jesus Christ (peace on him!) prayed to God before crucifixion the whole night so earnestly that 'being in an agony his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground'. In response to his prayer 'an angel appeared unto him from heaven strengthening him' (St Luke 22 43 44). Now when a righteous man in distress, especially a prophet of eminent rank prays to God earnestly, his prayer is invariably heard, and what the prophet prays for is granted. If an angel appeared in response to his prayer and strengthened him, what tidings of comfort did he bring, unless it were to assure him that God would not allow him to *die* on the Cross which he dreaded. Otherwise the appearance of the angel would be useless. Accordingly when Jesus (peace on him!) thought that there was delay in coming of the promised relief he cried out 'O Lord why hast thou forsaken me' and immediately a swoon overtook him and he was made to resemble one dead and the on lookers took him to be really dead. It must be recorded here that Jesus (peace on him!) was not at all afraid of death, for who knew better than he that every mortal has to die some time or other? But being a Jew he firmly believed that as stated in Deuteronomy chapter 21 verse 23 every one who died on the Cross was 'accursed of God'. It was this accursed death on the Cross that he dreaded and prayed against.

(8) The stone at the mouth of the sepulchre was found removed which would not have happened if the resurrection were super-natural.

(9) In all his post crucifixion appearances, he ever appears in a new disguise, so much so that even his own disciples could not recognise him. Does not this clearly prove that he was secreening himself from the hostile Jews lest they lay hands on him again and crucify him once more?

(10) If he had really risen from the dead to go up into heaven, why did he ask his disciples to meet him in Galilee? Would not he boldly show himself and go up to heaven in the view of all his persecutors, so that all who saw him would have believed on him and acknowledged him? For having fulfilled his work as is supposed of dying for the sinners and rising up from the dead, nobody could have laid his hands on him a second time why then his disguises and his betaking himself to Galilee unless it were to save his life and flee from the country?

(11) When he showed himself to his disciples after the rising he still bore marks of the crucifixion holes in the flesh and being hungry like any other mortal partook of fish and honeycomb Would that be the case if the rising had been supernatural?

(12) When before crucifixion the Jews wanted a sign or a miracle from Jesus (peace on him!) he replied "an evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign and there shall no sign be given to it but the sign of the prophet Jonas For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the Earth (St Matthew 12 39-40)

Now Jonas (peace on him!) was swallowed by the whale while he was alive and not after he died, alive he remained in the belly of the whale for three days and three nights and alive he came out after that time Unless Jesus (peace on him!) entered his sepulchre alive, remained there alive and came out alive the sign of Jonas and the prophecy of Jesus (peace on them!) could not be fulfilled

Now, Christian readers, twelve different reasons have been assigned to show that the Quranic assertion is true

that death did not occur on the Cross Still if you want its corroboration by your own scriptures, lo! here it is 'Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to SAVE HIM FROM DEATH AND WAS HEARD IN THAT HE FEARED' (Hebrews 5-7)

Here the matter is made clear that Jesus (peace on him!) prayed earnestly to God to save him from death on the Cross and that God saved him from what he feared

Again suppose you are a judge presiding over a court of justice and the Jews are arraigned before you for the crime of causing the death of Jesus (peace on him!) on the Cross and they offer all the above mentioned facts to prove that death was not caused would there be any alternative left to you supposing you were a God fearing justice loving judge but to acquit them of the charge as not proved? Then why cling obstinately to a belief which can not stand rational scrutiny? As this is the foundation of the current Christian theory of Salvation it behoves all seekers after salvation and eternal life to sift this matter thoroughly

Now has the matter been free from doubt even amongst the Christians? The writer had written thus far when it occurred to him to examine what the Christian higher critics had to say on the subject He found the following passage which is just what the writer has been seeking to prove and which fully corroborates the words of the Holy Qoran "And verily those who differ about him (Christ) are in doubt concerning him, they have no knowledge concerning him, but only follow an opinion" "Since this event (the resurrection of Christ) however, independently of its importance in respect to the internal connection of the Christian doctrine, was manifestly a miraculous occurrence, the credibility of the nar

The theory
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rative has *from the earliest times been brought into question*" (Celsus, apud Origen cont cels 1 2, Woolston, Discourses on the Miracles, disc VI, Chubb, Posth Works, 1 330, Morgan, the Resurrection Considered 1744) "Others who have admitted the facts as recorded to be beyond dispute, yet have attempted to show that *Christ was not really dead* but that being stunned and palsied, *he wore for a time the appearance of death* and was afterwards restored to consciousness, by the cool grave and the spices" (Kitto's Cyclopoedia of Biblical Literature Vol II page 602) In our own times, several dignitaries of the Church have expressed their dissent from the Resurrection Theory Archbishop Temple says "It is quite possible that our Lord's resurrection may be found hereafter to be no miracle at all in the scientific sense but the natural issue of the physical law is always at work (Resuscitation?)" Another Bishop of the Anglican Church argues that St Paul did not clearly believe in a carnal and literal resurrection, but only in a spiritual one The Rev A J Waldron announced on Easter Sunday 1914 that he did not believe in the physical resurrection of Jesus (peace on him,) vide page 20, the Religion of Jesus and Traditional Christianity

The reader will observe that the alleged resurrection of Christ (peace on him) has been a doubtful matter from his own time up to now

Such instances of the Holy Qoran correcting the Bible stories may be multiplied but those given here are quite enough to convince any fair minded reader that they were not simply copied and adopted It was the particular duty of the Holy Prophet to correct all mistakes that had crept into books of the previous prophets

CHAPTER XVIII

Three men born blind lived in a hut together One

The story
of the three
blind men

hot summer's day one of them asked the others what was the reason that they felt

warm at certain times and cold at others. One of them said that people said there was such a thing as the Sun which gave out heat to all the world. Another said that none of them knew what the sun was and it must therefore be left out of consideration. The true reason in his opinion was that as men and animals slept for some time and were quite inactive, their bodies generated no heat but when they woke up and exerted themselves to do some work or other, their bodies gave out heat and the atmosphere became warm in consequence. The third said "What our companion says is only partly true. The heat from the bodies of men and animals cannot warm the air to any large extent. I think that as men make fires to cook their food and thousands of hearths are kindled, the joint heat of all the fires warms the air which we feel, for the heat from the hearths is greater than that from the bodies. When no fires are kindled, the air becomes cool." They all agreed that this must be the true cause for variation of the temperature. When sometime afterwards an eminent surgeon operated upon the eyes of one of them and restored his eye sight, he looked at the glorious sun shedding its powerful light and heat all over the world, he was convinced of his error and told his erstwhile blind companions that their conjectures had all been wrong and that the great and effulgent sun it was that gave light and heat. Somewhat similar are the surmises and the reasonings of bigoted Christian writers regarding the Holy Prophet and the success he attained. In dealing with this vastly important subject, they completely ignore the existence of the Almighty Allah and His government of the world, as the blind men ignored the existence of the sun and its heat. If there is a God and He has been sending prophets into the world to instruct and uplift humanity as every true Christian must believe if he has faith in his own Scriptures and words of Jesus (peace on him!) can he imagine that He would allow a forger and impostor to write a book and pretend it to be the Word of God and claim to be His prophet, not being one in reality and mislead and consign to Hell and everlasting flames very nearly a third of the whole human race, by making

them believe in his false religion and pretended inspiration from God ? Is such a state of things imaginable ? Do we

find any instance of an impostor ruling over a country or province pretending to be the viceroy of an emperor by presenting false and forged credentials to the people as genuine commission from him ? Would not the emperor at once crush and destroy him for his daring usurpation of an office never conferred upon him ? If an earthly king can not allow such enormity in his dominions, is it conceivable that the Supreme Lord of the Universe would tolerate it ? We find from the life history of the Holy Prophet that Allah protected him from his innumerable enemies, enemies who thirsted after his blood, aided him at every turn, on many an occasion gave him and his disciples victory over their foes, sometimes ten fold their number, guarded him from private assassinations on various occasions, converted his bitterest enemies into his staunchest friends and auxiliaries, until at last he came out victorious over all and thoroughly effected what he was ordained for, so that idol worship, infanticide, prostitution, unlimited polygamy, drunkenness, gambling, usury, blood feuds, in fact all vices became past history throughout his vast country within a space of twenty three years. Did God suffer all this to be effected

by an impostor, as if He were helpless in the matter and did He actually encourage fraud ?
 All religions true in their original quality

“ At this rate,” the reader perhaps may say, ‘ all religions extant must be true religions as God suffers them to flourish on His Earth ’ And so they all were in the beginning. In fact there were no religions which differed in their essential principles. All religions were really one in their original purity. The aim of all religions is to teach mankind the Unity of their Creator, His sublime Attributes, His infinite Power, His Illimitable Mercy towards His Creatures, besides guided men to lead virtuous and useful lives. Though these latter instructions may be altered from time to time according to the capacity of the people and other causes yet the main and essential teaching about Our Lord the Creator of the Universe remains unaltered. Whenever a religion

suffered in its original purity, by the folly and superstition of mankind, Allah sent a prophet to restore it to its pristine purity. When all religions became corrupted to the core and men forgot their Maker and made gods of men and animals and bowed before idols of their own making, the All Merciful Allah was pleased to raise up a World Prophet and set him up as a model for all mankind to imitate and follow. The Holy Prophet has thoroughly explained to mankind the great folly of making associates with their Creator and has given them such detailed and explicit instructions for leading good lives that those that follow them attain to prosperity in this life and interminable felicity in the hereafter. A detailed and careful study of the Holy Qoran, the life of the Holy Prophet and the rise and spread of Islam all over the world, will bear out the statement. If people adopt Islam and follow its precepts, they themselves will be the gainers otherwise they only will be the losers. How foolish and suicidal is the attitude of those who without studying Islam properly and understanding it, call it a false religion and its Holy Prophet a sham! Suppose some one tells you, dear reader, that a snake had left its poison in your food during your absence and advises you to shun it. If you are a wise man you will at once examine the food and if any traces of the poison be found in it, you will abstain from eating it, and if you are a grateful person will also thank the warner as your benefactor. But if instead, you argue with him and say I do not know whether you are a truthful man or not and unless it is proved to me that you really speak the truth, I will not believe in what you say, nor will I abstain from eating the food and so saying you actually eat of it, death will certainly overtake you. The warner will not lose anything it will be you that will lose your life. Similarly neither Allah, nor the Holy Prophet will lose anything by your refusing to believe in the Holy Qoran. If you are a wise person you will in all earnestness study and understand it and then judge whether your beliefs and your actions are in conformity with it or not. Truth is

A false and
suicidal argu-
ment

truth in whatever language it is expressed, and through whomsoever it reaches us

When a deputation of Christians from Najaran waited upon the Holy Prophet and argued with him about the divinity of Christ (peace on him!) the Holy Prophet convinced them to the contrary and they in spite of the conviction still persisted in calling him the son of God, the Holy Prophet as a last measure challenged them to meet him at a certain open place bringing their families and children, telling them that he would do the same and then pray to Allah to curse those that were liars. And he actually took some members of his family with him and met the Christians and challenged them to invoke God's curse upon the lying party. The Christians were afraid and did not accept the challenge and submitted to him and promised to pay Jezia for his protection. Let the reader consider whether any impostor or false prophet would dare invoke the Almighty's curse upon himself and those dear to him. Is it not the height of folly and sheer pig-headedness to call such an ultra sincere person a sham?

The Holy Prophet being the last and a World-prophet and the Book revealed to him being the final word of Allah both have a special claim upon the consideration of all humanity as the latest Act of Government supersedes all previous Acts. The special function of the former is to point out and eliminate all errors that have crept into all contemporary religions that of the latter is to guide and instruct all mankind to attain everlasting life and interminable felicity. It behoves mankind therefore to study carefully and dispassionately a work with such high claims and also the life and actions and sayings of the Holy Prophet without prejudice or bias and in all earnestness. We have seen that success such as he attained was not given to any other prophet. What was the secret of such success?

Christianity which prevails to a large extent now a days, was but an obscure religion lurking in the dark for three centuries, till at last Constantine adopted it for his own reasons and the secular arm enforced it upon his subjects, demolishing Mithraism by force. Successive Christian kings and emperors did all in their power to spread it on the earth. Even in our own days, numerous missions are working assiduously all over the world with the same object and millions of money are being spent annually over them. Buddhism was propagated by Asoka a powerful monarch. Zoroastrianism had the mighty Persian Emperor at its back. But Islam had no such patron. Do not be led away by the false clamour of the Christian missionaries that Islam was propagated by the sword. History completely disproves it. All historians are unanimous in holding that it was *not*. It is true that Muslim Kings and emperors conquered many countries but they never enforced Islam upon their subjects. They did not demolish the temples and churches of the non-Muslims. On the other hand they made grants of land and money for their upkeep, a practice still to be seen in Muslim States. The conquered nations had always the option to retain their own religions. So whatever conversions took place, were always voluntary on the part of the converts. Neither were any special missions organised by the state for preaching Islam, nor any bribes offered to induce people to become Muslims. Perhaps the reader may think exemption from payment of *Jezia* on turning Muslims might have operated as an inducement to adopt it. This surmise is far from the truth. All Muslims had to pay the '*Zakat*' or legal alms, far greater than *Jezia* in value from which non-Muslims were exempt. Further the Muslims had to render military service to the state and from this also the non-Muslims were exempted. So that the non-Muslims were much better off as they were than the Muslims. Twice the Muslim power was completely overpowered once by the Tartars and once by the Moguls. But on both occasions the conquerors adopted the religion of the conquered and Islam shone forth with greater splendour than ever. This circum-

stance is also unique in the history of the world. China never felt the force of Muslim arms and yet we find some six to seven crores of Muslims in that country at the present day. Even now Islam is making rapid progress in Africa as reported by Christian missionaries in fact it is over poisoning and displacing Christianity there. Even in Europe, in England especially, learned and prominent men are gradually awakening to the truth of Islam and are adopting it one after another. Sale the English translator of the Holy Qoran, a bitter foe of Islam who calls the Holy Qoran 'an imposture,' with all his bigotry and hatred of Islam is obliged to write "I shall not here inquire into the reasons why the law of Muhammad has met with so unexampled a reception in the world, (*for they are greatly deceived who imagine it to have been propagated by the sword alone*), or by what means it came to be embraced by nations who never felt the force of the Muhammadan arms, and even by those which stripped the Arabians of their conquests, and put an end to the sovereignty and very being of their Caliphs, *yet it seems as if there was something more than what is vulgarly imagined* in a religion which has made so surprising a progress"

Gibbon in his History Vol. V Chapter XI says

Gibbons
refutation of
the charge
that Islam
was spread by
the sword

"In this conversion (of the non Muslim Turks who overthrew the Muslim Saracenic power) of their conquerors, a most remarkable and pointed refutation is given to the often-repeated charge, that Islamism was indebted to the sword for its success. FOR HERE

IS A GRAND PROOF THAT ISLAMISM NOT ONLY CONVERTED THOSE WHOM IT CONQUERED, BUT ALSO WHO CONQUERED ITS ADHERENTS. IT CONVERTED ITS CONQUERORS"

In this connection the reader may read Mathew Arnold's book entitled, "The Preachings of Islam" which will give him a fair idea of the matter

Once a European gentleman, the Collector of a District, during conversation with the writer asked him how it was that the Turkish Emperors, whilst at the height of their power had done nothing to propagate Islam in Europe. He said that Turkey was once so powerful that all the powers of the Christendom collectively could not cope with it and that if Turkey had brought a little pressure to bear upon its subjects to turn Muslims the prevailing religion of Europe on the present day would have been Islam instead of Christianity. The writer replied that the Turks who implicitly obeyed the Holy Qoran, could not have forced people to change their religion in the face of its clear prohibitive injunctions such as —

There is no compulsion in religion the right way has been distinguished from the wrong and whoso disbelieves in idols and demons and believes in Allah, he has got hold of the firm handle, in which is no breaking off and Allah both hears and knows "

(The Holy Qoran 2 256)

"But had thy Lord pleased all who are in the earth would have believed altogether, as for thee wilt thou force men to become believers ?"

" But then leaving force and compulsion aside the Government could have organised missions to teach and preach Islam and induce people to adopt it," said he. The writer replied, "Yes, certainly the Turks were culpably neglectful in this respect and the neglect has cost them their empire "

The reader will fail to point out one single case in which any person was put to death simply for refusing to adopt Islam

Like the crescent, the Holy Prophet appeared on the horizon of the world and gradually increased in grandeur

and lustre, and in spite of the hooting of owls, and the barking of dogs, he burst out at last resplendent as the full moon, shedding his light on all the dark spots, far and near. But unlike the full moon which gradually wanes till it again becomes the crescent, the religion preached by the Holy Prophet is ever gaining and never losing. It will no doubt one day become the religion of all humanity as foretold by the Holy Prophet, as it is the only religion that appeals to human reason and possesses the width and elasticity essential for a world religion.

As for the Holy Qoran revealed to him by Allah, it is in its own language a cure and guidance and mercy to all those who believe in it. Some peculiar properties of the Holy Qoran It was not revealed all at once but sent down piece meal during a space of twenty-three years. Whenever an incident occurred requiring Divine guidance, the angel Gabriel brought down a verse or a few verses to enlighten the Holy Prophet. Now, though almost all the verses were revealed to suit specific occurrences such as the beauty and comprehensiveness of the Divine language that every verse lays down a general rule for all mankind for all time to follow. Its diction is inimitable. When pagan Arabs heard it recited they prostrated themselves and said that they rendered homage to the elegance and excellence of the language. Not knowing anything about their Creator and as yet not believing in the mission of the Holy Prophet they were doubtful as to the Divine origin of the Holy Qoran, the Merciful Allah to clear their doubt, sent down a challenge to all mankind to join together and produce a few verses like it, and the challenge remains unaccepted till now, though nearly fourteen centuries have elapsed and the foes of Islam have been numerous. Is it not really a miracle that an illiterate Arab should produce such a work that all the literati of the world could not imitate? The reader must bear in mind that any book in any language loses the greater part of its beauty and elegance when translated into any other. The more so is the case with the Holy Qoran. To appreciate its beauty it must be studied in

the original No translation can do justice to it There are several words in Arabic, the equivalents of which are not to be found in the English language For instance the word 'Rubb' which is translated as 'the Lord' has a volume full of meaning in Arabic which the English word does not convey It is said that some forty thousand commentaries have been written on the Holy Book and still new ones are being added day after day In fact it is an inexhaustible mine of wisdom and guidance According to the Encyclopoedia Britannica the Holy Qoran is the most widely read book on the face of the Earth The Prophet has said that the Holy Qoran has seven different interpretations, that is every verse has seven different esoteric meanings in addition to the obvious literal meaning All these peculiarities are lost in translations however elaborate they may be Its very intonation is enchanting Even those who do not understand Arabic listen to its recital spell-bound and feel a chastening and elevation of spirit which they do not feel at other times Another grand feature of the Holy Qoran is that it invariably instructs and guides the people who consult it in good faith Whenever a Muslim feels a doubt about any spiritual matter and in all humility of spirit consults earnestly its pages to derive guidance therefrom, he always finds such passages in it that he would consider them to have been expressly revealed to meet his own special case This is one of its miraculous features The present writer's personal experience has on numberless occasions proved this The Holy Book contains verses which are infallible remedies for specific ailments of the body and there are others to meet and ward off contingent dangers A thatched two-storied house in which the writer lived was on one occasion saved miraculously from fire, one hot summer's day by the mere repeated recital of a particular verse, whilst the houses on both sides of it and even a live tamarind tree standing some three houses off were burnt down. The details of this phenomenon will be given in a future chapter Does not such a wonderful book deserve to be studied carefully?

As for the Holy Prophet's life, this small book will have given the reader a general outline of

The Holy Prophet the greatest martyr of the world.

It is also a remarkable fact that no other Prophet's life is so well known to the world as his. All his sayings and actions have been recorded with such peculiar care and scrupulousness that it is an exclusive feature of Islam, to be found nowhere else. The reader will have noted that from the commencement of his mission up to the end of his earthly life, the Holy Prophet had to undergo such suffering for his faith that no other prophet ever did. Not only his own clan but also other clans became hostile to him as soon as he announced himself a messenger of Allah. They scoffed at him, insulted him at every turn, disturbed him in his preachings and prayers, by raising a din around him and crying out "Madman!" "Madman!" When this did not dissuade him from his work, they offered him bribes but even this being rejected, their hostility grew into deadly enmity. They ostracised him from their community and together with those near and dear to him, confined him for three long years in a ravine amidst hills cutting off the supply of all necessities. But he nobly stuck to his guns and never once swerved from his course. They then began to assault him and handle him roughly, so much so that they stoned him and on various occasions bathed him in his own blood. They conspired at last to do away with him in such a manner that no blood-feud may ensue. With this object a number of men from different clans surrounded his house one night and were awaiting with drawn swords in their hands, his issuing from the house in the morning from prayers, ready to cut him down to pieces by a simultaneous attack. But him, whom Allah protects no one dare injure. He was obliged, to save his life, to quit his dear home for ever and seek refuge with strangers at Medina some three hundred miles off. Even there he was not left unmolested. Threatening letters were sent to him and his helpers. Nor was this all. They actually made war upon him and his adherents with a view to annihilate Islam and the Muslims. Thus

the Holy Prophet was obliged to take up arms, much against his will, in self-defence. In addition to making frequent wars against him, they instigated the Jews to revolt against his government and create disturbances within the city, whilst they themselves, his enemies the Qoreish besieged it from without. The Jews once poisoned him and made other attempts to murder him. Various other attempts were made by the Qoreish themselves to assassinate him. But Allah kept him under His special protection always. No suffering however intense and no danger however over-whelming ever made him slack in the discharge of his duty as a prophet until at last he achieved what no other human being ever could. Is not the life of such a personage one to be studied carefully and reverentially? What martyr ever suffered so much for his faith as did the Holy Prophet for twenty three long years? It is comparatively easier to lose one's life with one stroke by sudden decapitation, assassination or in a battle. But to endure such life long torment requires an amount of fortitude and firmness which does not fall to the lot of ordinary mortals. Can there be any doubt that the Holy Prophet was the greatest martyr the world has witnessed?

CHAPTER XIX.

As for the supreme dignity conferred by Allah upon His chosen World Prophet, how can the feeble pen of this unworthy writer do justice, in describing it? How can a poor mortal sufficiently extol him whom the Creator Himself has extolled?

Supreme dignity of
the Holy Prophet
amongst mankind.

"Have We not expanded for thee thy breast and exalted for thee thy renown?"

(Qoran 94 1 4)

"And We have not sent thee but as a mercy to the World"

(Ibid 21-108).

"And, verily, thou art of a grand nature"

(Ibid 68 5)

"Verily His grace towards thee is great"

(Ibid 17 89)

"Ye have in the Apostle of God *a good example* for him who hopes for God and the last day, and who remembers God much'

(Ibid 33 21)

"O thou prophet! verily, We have sent thee as a witness and a herald of glad tidings and a warner, and to call men unto God by His permission, and *as an illuminating lamp*'

(Ibid 33 44-45)

Such and similar are the laudatory words of Allah regarding His Last Apostle. Certainly He has 'exalted' his renown above that of all other human beings. The advent of the Holy Prophet had indeed been a *mercy* to the world. Consider the wide dissemination he made of the knowledge of the Unity of God, at a time when the world was steeped in darkness and men were bowing before wood and stones, the equalization of men of all colour, rank, pedigree and race, the great uplift of women and slaves he effected, the humane laws he made regarding wars, abolishing all cruelty and barbarity from it, his eradication of the evils of drunkenness, usury, gambling, child-murder, prostitution and a host of other vices that had overspread the earth, consider all this good he had done to humanity and you will feel convinced that his coming into the world was '*indeed*' a mercy'. Then look at his public and private life, how he never took revenge from those who had done him the greatest harm imaginable, how he led a pure, chaste and simple life throughout his career, how he never once told a lie nor ever broke a promise and thus gained the title of 'Al-Amin' or 'the truthful' from his nation, how persevering and zealous he was in discharge of duty, never flinching from it under grave danger and strong opposition, how kind, compassionate and actively sympathetic he was

towards the destitute, in fact, look at him from any point of view and it will be clear that indeed he was a 'good example' to humanity, As for Allah's comparing him to

Why the Holy Prophet was called an illuminating lamp.

an 'illuminating lamp' the reader will note the peculiar appropriateness of the simile. He was not called an illuminating sun' or 'moon' which he might well have been considering the vast diffusion of true wisdom and knowledge he effected in all parts of the earth, on the other hand he is called a lamp. Why? Not because his lustre was small but because a lamp kindles myriads of other lamps, which neither the sun nor the moon does. Accordingly the Holy Prophet made sages and saints of all his companions each in himself a light or guiding star and amongst the followers of the Holy Prophet were born numberless persons of whose existence the earth may well be proud. There have been poets, statesmen, legists, scientists, divines, philosophers, saints, soldiers, astronomers, mathematicians, logicians, moralists, doctors of medicine, rhetoricians, lexicographers, biographers, historians, writers of fiction and romance, encyclopaedists, world tourists, geographers, explorers, chemists and inventors of world celebrity. Modern sciences and arts owe their origin chiefly to the researches of the followers of the Holy Prophet. History bears out the truth of the assertion. Whilst the Bible was a sealed book to the laity and the Church acting on the principle that 'ignorance is the mother of devotion' actively and persistently suppressed all learning and attempts at self-improvement and instruction, the Holy Prophet enjoined strictly the study of the Holy Qoran and the acquisition of learning upon all his followers, male and female and the result was that the world saw the light of science. He has said that the erudite amongst his followers would be like the prophets of the Jews. Men like Hazrath Sheikh Abdul Khader Jeelani of Baghdad, Khawja Moinuddien Chishti of Ajmere, Imam Fakhruddien Razi, Imam Al-Gazali, Moulana Jalaluddien Rumi, the author of the famous Masnavi, Mohiyuddien-ibn-e-Arabi, Imam Abu Hanifa, Imam Shafai, Sheikh Saadi, Khaja Hafiz Shirazi and a

host of similar personages prove the truth of this tradition To revert to the dignity of the Holy Prophet The Muslims more than one-fourth and nearly a third part of humanity pay him the highest reverence, placing him next only to Allah His sacred name is cried out five times a day, year in year out from millions of mosque minarets all the world over Whenever the sacred name is pronounced every good Muslim invokes Allah's blessing and mercy upon him The same rule applies whenever it is written down Wherever there are Muslims there are mosques and Muslims pray therein or in their homes at least five times during the twenty-four hours and invoking the mercy and blessings of Allah upon the Holy Prophet forms an essential and integral part of the namaz, without which it would be incomplete We know that countries are placed in different latitudes and longitudes but the sun shines over them all without exception

A portion of humanity engaged incessantly in invoking God's blessings on the Holy Prophet

If in one country it is time for the morning prayer in another country it is time for afternoon prayers, elsewhere it is time for vespers or evening prayer So that Allah's mercy and blessings are invoked upon the Holy Prophet by millions of men and women incessantly during the day and the night In addition to this, every pious Muslim voluntarily imposes upon himself or herself the duty of making this invocation (Durwood as it is called in Arabic) from one hundred to ten thousand times a day and counting it by turning a bead of the rosary for every Durwood Does any other human being enjoy this reverence?

Apart from the reverence paid to him it is a unique feature of Islam that all true Muslims bear unlimited love and affection for their prophet They love him more than they love their families and even their own lives More than thirteen centuries have passed away since his time but yet at the present day their will be found amongst the Muslims millions who would gladly sacrifice their worldly substance, their families and children and their own lives, if they be assured that the Holy Prophet

would be pleased thereat This is no exaggeration but the solid truth This is the reason why Muslims cannot brook the least disrespect being shown towards their beloved Master Is it not miraculous that such love should exist in the minds of men for a person whom they never saw and who passed away thirteen hundred years ago ? The success of a prophet of Allah is gauged by the number of converts he makes and the hold he gets over the hearts of his followers, and not by the number of parables he relates Look at the companions and the early followers of the Holy Prophet How staunch was their faith in him and how in carrying out his wishes, they hesitated not to sacrifice their fortunes, their families and their very lives This selfsacrificing spirit and staunch devotion and attachment continues up to now, amongst his followers, and will last for ever Did any other nation on the face of the earth ever risk its all to fight for preaching the Unity of Allah ? To cut the matter short, the dignity of the Holy Prophet is unequalled No human being was ever born who commanded such reverence and love, no one was born who did so much good to the world Allah has perfected faith and religion in him and through him, so that no new prophet can come and improve upon it, for how can that which is *perfect* be improved or made *more perfect* ? He is rightly called the last and the seal of prophets It is said that all the world loves Allah and Allah loves His Chosen Prophet Nor is this passing belief If a master painter were to paint a thousand pictures, it is obvious that all pictures cannot possess the same merit Would not the painter admire and love the best amongst his own handiwork ? O, ye Muslim readers, study the life and sayings of your prophet, and the book he brought and try to obey and love him to the best of your power, for the love of Allah and His Prophet is the key to your salvation Some foolish persons think that the Holy Prophet's function was simply to deliver Allah's messages to mankind and having done that he has no more concern with his followers nor have his followers anything to do with him This is obviously a grievous error We have everything to do

with, and hope for from our beloved Master Allah has repeatedly ordered us in the Holy Qoran to obey His Prophet, so that obeying the Prophet is obeying Allah. No doubt the Holy Qoran was sent to us for our guidance and it is sufficient for us, if properly understood. But it was sent through the Holy Prophet whose orders Allah enjoins us to obey in addition to those contained in the Book. Besides who can understand and interpret it so well as he to whom it was revealed? Hence the necessity for tuition from him. The Holy Qoran and the Holy Prophet's sayings explain and supplement each other. Hence the superiority of those persons who received exposition of the Holy Book from the lips of the Holy Prophet direct and after them that of those who received tuition from his immediate disciples and so on. Especially we Indians who do not understand the Arabic language and idiom so well as those whose mother-tongue it is are particularly in need of teachers, who have been acknowledged by the nation to be well skilled in interpreting the Holy Qoran and the Holy Prophet's sayings. Hence the necessity for following any one of the four Imams, who have been universally acknowledged as masters of their art. Every person is not competent to rightly interpret the Holy Qoran and to distinguish between the genuine and spurious Tradition. Hence if we follow any one of the universally-acknowledged Imams, who made it their life's work to study them both we will be safe. The responsibility of error if any will be shifted to the Imam from us. If on the other hand, every reader of the Holy Qoran and of the Traditions were to put his own construction upon and interpret passages according to his own will and judgment, he will make a mess of the whole matter. Not that any restriction is placed upon any one's individual judgment in Islam but at the same time every school-boy is not competent to give an opinion in expounding it. The man must first qualify himself properly by acquiring a comprehensive knowledge of the subject and then give an opinion. Do we not see that though the books of Law are written in plain language, yet every reader of them is not competent to write commentaries there on.

An amusing story is told that in a mosque in a certain village, an itinerant preacher recited a tradition of the Holy Prophet "La salata illa be huzoor-il-khalb" Translated it means "No Namaz but with presence of mind" The preacher, who was a Punjabi and could not properly pronounce the Arabic letter **Kh** mis-pronounced '**Khalb**' as "**Kalb**" In Arabic *Khalb* means mind and *Kalb* means a dog The meaning would then be "No Namaz but in the presence of a dog" Next time he visited the village the preacher found a big black dog tied up in the arch of the mosque during prayer time When he asked the people about it, they replied that they had literally obeyed the Tradition of the Holy Prophet as expounded by the preacher himself during his last visit. Those men were not aware of another tradition of the Holy Prophet that if a dog, especially a black dog happens to pass before one engaged in Namaz, the Namaz is annulled and should be offered afresh hence their ludicrous mistake

The Holy Qoran prohibits the use of *Khamar* or wine obtained by fermentation from the juice of the grape A superficialist may contend that as opium and hasheesh are not prohibited in the Holy Qoran by name their use would be allowable Indeed some European biographers of the Holy Prophet have actually fallen into this error, they seem to think that their use is allowed in Islam This shows their imperfect knowledge of the Islamic religion The Holy Prophet has unequivocally proclaimed that *all intoxicants* are forbidden to Muslims, no matter whether they be obtained by fermentation, distillation or otherwise

In order to form a sound opinion on any matter connected with the Islamic religion, a perfect knowledge of the Arabic language and idiom is absolutely necessary in the first place as the Holy Qoran and the Traditions

A ludicrous interpretation of a Tradition

Another error into which some Europeans have fallen

One reason why several sects have sprung up in Islam

are contained in that language. Then one's study of these two repositories of knowledge and ordinances must be deep and profound as there are some apparent contradictions in them, which a smatterer or half-read person cannot reconcile. Hence several sects arose in Islam, most of them ephemeral, which though agreeing in the main principles of it, differed in minor details. For instance, seeing the words 'hands' and 'visage' used in reference to Allah in the Holy Qoran one sect held that He must have a body like ourselves for how could He have hands without a body? It ignores those verses wherein it is affirmed that nothing is like unto Allah. This contradiction is only apparent. Looking at all the verses on the subject a well-read person would at once explain that the words 'hands' 'visage' and similar others must be taken in a metaphorical and not in their literal sense. The discrepancy then disappears. Another sect maintained that Allah is seated on His Throne just as a human being would sit. This sect ignored verses of the Holy Qoran which affirm that Allah is present everywhere. The reader will observe that these are mere polemical discussions, which do not affect the truth and validity of Islam. As such they had better be avoided. What the writer means to point out here is that every semi-informed person is not competent to give a correct interpretation of the Holy Qoran and the Traditions. No one can give a meaning to any passage in the Holy Qoran contrary to that given by the Holy Prophet. As for testing a Tradition

A rule for testing the authenticity of a Tradition.

if it is genuine or otherwise the Holy Prophet has given us a golden rule to go by. He has instructed us to reject as spu-

rious all such Traditions as are plainly opposed to the Holy Qoran

CHAPTER XX

We all know that we were not consulted before being sent into the world. We also equally well know that we did not come of our own will and power. Nor is it conceivable that

The necessity for religion.

the several atoms of our bodies spontaneously arranged themselves symmetrically into living human forms and began to move and act in the manner we do. It follows therefore that there is some One who has brought us into existence. A nice instructive story is told of how Hazrat Imam Abu Hanifa argued this matter with an atheist.

A certain atheist of Baghdad challenged the Imam to prove the existence of God to his satisfaction. The challenge was accepted and both parties agreed to meet in the principal mosque of the city on a certain day at a stated hour to argue. The whole city of Baghdad assembled there to watch the controversy. The atheist punctually arrived at the place but the Imam was late by about an hour. When at last he did appear something like the following dialogue took place.

Atheist Imam saheb, you have kept us all waiting for about an hour and this waste of time is so much dead loss to us.

Imam Friend, I beg your pardon most sincerely but I assure you, had you seen what I saw on the way, you too would have been delayed. I started at the proper time to be here punctually, but I happened to watch an extra-ordinary occurrence by the way which kept me enthralled and made me forget the time.

Atheist What was that wonderful sight which made you forget the appointment ?

Imam As I was coming along the river bank, I saw a huge timber tree standing there fall down all at once, without any one felling it. And then I saw that it was sawed into planks and what is more wonderful, the planks formed themselves into a boat and the boat began spontaneously to ferry people from this side of the river to that and vice versa. And all this happened without any human agency. Was it not wonderful ?

Atheist Imam Sahab, do you take me for a veritable idiot and do you expect me to believe this absurd cock-and bull story ?

Imam Hold, friend, just consider which of our two respective stories is absurd I simply said that a boat formed itself out of timber without any human agency and you say that all this universe with its millions of worlds, suns, moons stars, oceans, rivers mountains together with all the trees and men and animals living therein came into existence by themselves without a Designer and are working harmoniously without any hitch with no Controller

This rejoinder from the Imam set the atheist a thinking afresh and he is said to have eventually turned a Muslim

We find that nothing in nature is created without a specific purpose What then is the purpose with which Man was created ? What particular part is he intended to play ? Wise men have classified all the objects on the earth into three classes the mineral, the vegetable and the animal

Objects which cannot shift themselves from place to place and which do not palpably grow such as stones form the mineral class Objects attached to the earth which grow in volume though unable to shift their position form the second or the vegetable class Third or the animal class comprises all objects, which are not attached to the earth like plants and possess the power of voluntary locomotion Man by virtue of possessing powers and faculties not shared by any other creature deserves to form a special class For having all the powers of all the three classes, he has in addition an invaluable endowment variously named, Reason, Intellect, Mind or Spirit This

The classification
of natural objects

last named, faculty enables him to understand the nature and properties of all things and to distinguish between right and wrong, as also to communicate his ideas to others. It is obvious that Allah has not grudged the bestowal of powers upon His creatures necessary for their life and comfort. On the other hand He has not bestowed one superfluous or unnecessary gift upon any creature. The fishes that live in deep water at the bottom of the ocean have not been given eye-sight as the sun's light does not reach them. Water-fowls have the capacity to dive under water and seek their food, whilst other birds cannot do so. It would be against the economy of creation to give what is not wanted. It follows that those faculties which are bestowed upon man are intended to be used by him and not left in eternal duress and allowed to rot by disuse. It would be the height of ingratitude towards our Creator and injustice to ourselves if we do not utilize the precious gifts He has bestowed upon us. Eyes are given to us to see with and acquire knowledge of our surroundings. If some one were to put on a permanent bandage over his eyes and refuse to look around him he would certainly be considered an idiot. Similarly if any one were to put on a bandage over his mental vision and not allow the mind to exercise its normal function, he would be placed in the same category. Now what is the function of the mind? It is to acquire knowledge. The Holy Prophet has said 'the acquisition of knowledge is imperative on every Muslim male and female' and the Holy Qoran has laid down "But he who in this life is blind, shall be blind in the next too and farther from the way."

(The Holy Qoran 17/74)

Allah, in His Book constantly addresses mankind thus "Why do you not reflect?" "Why do you not consider?" "There are signs in Our Works for those who meditate." These are parables for those who understand &c. These are frequent admonitions to mankind to use their intellect.

Jesus (peace on him!) has also said in his parable that a certain master gave five talents (ancient coins of silver) to a servant, two to another and only one to a third, with orders to trade and increase their respective amounts. A few days afterwards when he called his servants to account the first two servants tendered double the amounts they had received. But the third servant who had buried his one talent in the earth and had loitered away his time without utilising it in trade, tendered the one talent he had received. The master was well pleased with the first two servants and praised and rewarded them, but the third idle unprofitable servant he scolded, and also took away from him the one talent that had been given him and cast him into outer darkness where there was weeping and gnashing of teeth.

(St. Matthew 25 14-30)

The question arises then what kind of knowledge is it that we are enjoined to acquire. Of-
 Different kinds of knowledge course knowledge or learning is a vast boundless ocean. No human being can hope to acquire all knowledge because his span of life is short and his powers are limited. We are hence obliged to differentiate its several kinds and confine ourselves to acquiring only what can be of use to us. The Holy Prophet has prayed to Allah to keep him from such knowledge as could be of no use to him. To understand the motion of the sun, moon, stars and planets, to know the composition of the earth and its different strata, to measure and learn the depth of water in the several seas and oceans, to compute the distance of the several Planets from our earth and from one another, to study the growth of trees and their duration of life, to ascertain how each and every one of the organs of the human body works during life, to learn how to perform surgical operations, to play the violin, all this is knowledge indeed. But can it be said that all such knowledge is equally necessary and important to us. How then are we to determine what is necessary and what not? It

requires no great effort of understanding to know that whatever concerns ourselves, that is about the welfare of our bodies and souls is of primary importance to us. Then a knowledge of the things around us according to their proximity to us and according to the extent of our concern with them is essential. It is obvious that nothing is nearer to us than ourselves.

To an anxious enquirer the following questions will at once suggest themselves. Who and what am I? Whence have I come and whither am I going? For what purpose was I sent into this world? What is death and does my existence terminate with the perishing of my body or does anything of me survive after I die? Seeing that I did not come into the world by my own will and power and that I do not know when I may die, there must be Someone who brought about my birth and will in time cause me to die. Who is that Being? What are His attributes? What was His object in creating me? How can I best fulfil it? These are all vital questions for every human being, male or female. The reader will find the right answers to these several queries in the Holy Quran and the Sayings of the Holy Prophet. It was this knowledge particularly that he enjoined upon his followers to acquire. And it is the peculiar function of the human mind to acquire this knowledge and it was for this purpose that man was endowed with the precious gift. The lower animals are destitute of it. Next after these arise the questions of how to carry on one's existence seeing that the soul cannot perform its function but by the aid of one's body and its organs. Three things are essential to keep the soul and body together, food, raiment and a lodging. A knowledge of how to acquire these means of existence and of the laws of health is also necessary. All knowledge not concerning these two matters is superfluous and of secondary importance, to be acquired only after the above mentioned two kinds of knowledge has been acquired. The Holy

Vital questions for
consideration by
every human being

Two kinds of knowledge necessary as stated by the Holy Prophet

Prophet has said that knowledge, that is knowledge to be necessarily acquired is only of two kinds, viz, a knowledge of the body, that is how to keep it in health and a knowledge of religion, that is how to keep the soul in health. Priority is given to the body as the soul by its conjunction with the body suffers when the body suffers. A healthy body is a fit receptacle for a healthy soul.

The relation of the soul to the body

The relation of the soul to the body is that of a rider to the horse. It is the soul that preserves the body and controls it. A healthy strong man cannot well prosecute his journey on a sick lame horse both must be in good condition. If a foolish rider were to devote all his time and energy in tending his horse and forget the journey he has to perform, it is obvious that it will never be accomplished. People for the most part are like this forgetful rider. All their efforts are directed towards the upkeep of their bodies, over looking their souls. Their chief aim in life is to minister to their desires of the flesh, to live in comfort, luxury and slothful ease. As remarked by a sage, eating is for living but most people seem to think that living is for eating. Further mankind are prone to run after the ornamental in preference to the useful. They neglect what is essential and spend most of their time in amateurish pursuits of no importance such as theatricals, singing, dancing, painting, sculpture, drawing and similar pursuits not with a view to earn a livelihood therefrom but just to 'kill time' and enjoy themselves. A learned professor spends all his life-time in studying the birth, growth and habits of different kinds of butterflies, caterpillars and moths, another has no time nor taste for anything but Egyptology. Not that there is any prohibition in Islam against studying the sciences, cultivating the fine arts or even engaging in innocent healthy recreation but then these things should be kept within bounds and not allowed to overlap their proper limits, to the detriment of more consequential pursuits.

We must first procure bread and meat and then go after sauces. If a fool were to cram his table with various sauces, chutnies and pickles and yet have no scrap of bread nor a shred of meat upon it, it is clear that he will have to starve. Sauces and chutnies are good things if taken with more substantial viands, but by themselves they cannot satisfy hunger or nourish the body. Similarly if one neglecting the needs and demands of one's soul were to spend all one's time in studying trivialities will find oneself a loser in the end. Jesus (peace on him!) has said 'What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?' And so have said all the other prophets, before and after him.

The soul needs its own nutriment as much as the body

It must be borne in mind that the soul needs its own peculiar nutriment, as much as the body needs its own and both are equally liable to disease and deterioration, from inanition and other causes. The Benificent Being who has provided physic and doctors in abundance to cure the body has also provided spiritual Doctors or Apostles to cure human souls.

It may pertinently be asked what is the food for the human soul. We know that different organs

What is food for the soul

require different kinds of food and that what is food for one organ is no food for another. It may be stated generally that whatever satisfies the natural craving of a particular organ invigorates it and bestows on it a sense of felicity is its appropriate food. For instance the stomach requires edible objects to satisfy its craving, the tongue requires tasteful things, the eyes want beautiful objects to look at, the nose is pleased with good scents, the ear with good music and the sense of touch likes contact with soft silky objects. What then does the human soul require what is its natural food? As the soul is not material object no other material object can form its food. Everything in nature tends to revert to its original source and till it reaches it, it is restless. During storms when high winds are blowing, particles of dust

leave the earth and are carried up by them towards the sky and float about in the atmosphere shifting with winds, but when the winds cease and quiet is restored, every atom of it settles down and clings tenaciously to its mother Earth. A drop of water falling from the clouds on the top of a high mountain, tickles down the rock and uniting with other drops forms a pool and then merges into a river and rushes down with great velocity leaping and frisking, overcoming all obstacles in its course and after several restless meanderings and ups and downs, finally reaches the ocean from which it originally sprang and then only it is at rest. Similarly every human soul strives and aspires to obtain proximity to its Original Source. As a fish is restless when out of water, so the soul that has strayed far from its Source is restless. A soul sullied by sin is, as it were, thrust forth from the vicinity of the

Why do criminals
feel pangs of con-
science

Source of all purity and good. The criminal after committing a crime, feels what are commonly called pangs of conscience in reality it is the soul grieving that it has strayed farther from the Source of all goodness whence it originally emanated. In some cases these mental tortures are so agonising that the criminal unable to bear them any longer even commits suicide or makes a clean breast of his crime to the authorities of the law and renders himself up to retributive justice. Nor are these tortures brought on by fear of detection and punishment for criminals have been known to confess their crime, even when all fear of detection has passed away and every scrap of incriminating evidence has disappeared. Why then this agony of the soul, if not for the reason stated above? The truth is that every human soul, however sullied and hardened retains a secret longing to revert to its original purity and reach the Blessed Neighbourhood whence it came, a fact of which the possessor of the soul himself may at times be unconscious but which nevertheless holds true in all cases. It is thus clear that the vicinity of Allah or Love of Him confers felicity upon the human soul. The reader must understand that the vicinity mentioned here is spiritual and not physical for neither the soul nor Our Creator

possess material bodies And as Love of Allah cannot be begotten without a correct knowledge of His Being and of His Attributes, such as His Omnipotence, Omniscience, omnipresence, His Infinite Mercy and Compassion towards His Creatures, His Munificence &c, the acquisition of such knowledge becomes absolutely necessary Hence a true knowledge of Allah and Love of Him may be said to form food for the soul The study of the Holy Qoran is

Why the study of the Holy Qoran and Namaz five times a day are enjoined upon every Muslim

enjoined upon every Muslim to acquire this necessary knowledge And Namaz five times a day is ordered to strengthen and give outward expression the Love a Muslim bears towards his Maker and to accustom him to His All pervading and Eternal

Presence, whither every human being will ultimately return, as also to perpetuate His remembrance

It must be understood that Love of Allah is implanted in every human breast, though in some cases it is more conspicuous than in others About Love Allah is Himself Love The whole universe is an outward manifestation of Divine Love Without His Love nothing could have come into existence Because He loved His creatures with unbounded love He brought them into the world and has been bestowing upon them His unstinted Love every moment of their existence Ponder over His multifarious munificent gifts who can count them? He has given us not only what is absolutely necessary for our living here but has also showered down upon us with a most liberal hand innumerable things to make our lives comfortable, easy and luxurious He has been watching over us with unremitting care He has been protecting us from manifold dangers He sees us committing sins or acting contrary to His Commands and yet He does not stint our bread Sincere repentance^e on the part of sinners ensures His pardon Is it not then meet on our part to love Him in return, with all our might and main, seeing that Love is all that human beings can offer to their maker? To quote an example from the Holy Qoran When a severe storm is raging on the ocean and

a ship is caught in it, when strong gales are tossing and whirling it about as a feather, when enormous mountain-like waves are buffeting against it, every one on board the ship spontaneously turns towards Allah, and sincerely prays to Him to save him. This turning towards Him is not a result of long meditation. It is, on the contrary as

Men spontaneously
turn towards their
Maker in danger

instinctive, and sudden as the raising up of one's hand to ward off a blow descending upon one's head. This fact proves that the human soul is perfectly aware of the existence of the Creator and of His power to save His creatures. But how many persons forget His Mercy as soon as the danger passes away. Most people bestow their love upon transitory things such as wealth and power. Some men make goddesses of women but, often times these goddesses betray feet of clay. Every one of us knows for certain that all his earthly possessions will leave him, when he dies. The knowledge and Love of Allah is the only thing that will remain with him together with the good or evil he wrought during life,

The human soul in its state of purity is attracted by Allah as a bit of steel is drawn by the load

The human soul is
attracted by Allah
if pure

stone but when an alloy is made of the steel by mixing it with other metals it loses the capacity to be thus attracted, until it gets rid of the admixture. Similarly when men's minds are filled with love for things besides Allah, such minds are in an abnormal diseased condition and instead of being attracted by Allah are repelled, until they are purified. Those who love worldly possessions only such as wives, children, wealth, power and similar objects are misplacing their love. They bestow it upon the gifts which have been given to them for their comfortable passage through life, instead of upon the Bestower. It is to cure such morbid souls by pointing out to them the comparative worthlessness and the fleeting nature of such earthly objects and to restore them to their pristine purity so that they may regain the capacity to be attracted by their Maker, that Apostles of Allah have been sent. Is it not the height of

folly and ingratitude on the part of man to ignore the Munificent Being who has bestowed upon him all that he (man) possesses and with whom he has to remain for all eternity, and centre his affections upon objects created and helpless like himself and who cannot accompany him beyond the grave? Love is a much misused word. It is used very indiscriminately. A man is said to love himself, his wife, his children, his parents, his wealth, his position, his friends and his pet animals. It is obvious that the same feeling is not meant in all these instances, though the same word 'love' is used throughout. Love is far too high and noble a feeling to be bestowed upon these unworthy objects. It is an attribute of Allah Himself and has emanated from Him direct and therefore He alone is deserving of it and it is exclusively due to His Sublime Being.

Love due to
Allah alone

As for the other objects mentioned, we may like them, admire them, esteem them, hold them dear but genuine Love is exclusively due to Our Creator. The religion of

Islam teaches us
how to rate things
at their proper
worth

Islam teaches us how to rate things at their proper worth. Hence worshipping any other object besides Allah is strictly forbidden, as worship is an outward expression of

highest Love. When some of the followers of the Holy Prophet, witnessing his numerous miracles and his super

The Holy Prophet
prohibited men
from worshipping
him

human virtues sought permission of him to worship him, he prohibited them from doing so and impressed upon them strongly that worship was due to Allah alone.

If a person really loves Allah, he will of course obey His Commands. Mere lip-profession of love is not real love. Obedience to orders is the first and direct proof of real love. It will not do for a man or woman to shut in himself or herself in a cell and pretend it is for the love of Allah.

The Holy Prophet has explained that there is no
No monasticism
in Islam. monasticism or monkery in Islam. Allah
has bestowed upon us talents and bodily

strength, to be used in His Service and that of His Creatures, our fellow-beings and not to be kept dormant for ever

The Holy Prophet has also said that every human child is born in the religion of nature, that is Islam but its parents make of him a Christian or Jew, a fire worshipper or an idolater as the case may be. Nature is simple, its laws are simple and so is Islam. There is nothing in Islam, repugnant to human nature or incomprehensible by any human being, intelligent or otherwise. Islam is free from dogmas which require any amount of casuistry to support or defend. That there is an All-Powerful Creator of the Universe, as is obvious from His work of creation, that He is self-existent and Eternal, having neither a son nor a mother that He is the Sole Lord of the Universe, all that is besides Him being His handiwork and has no associates, that He is free from all the frailties and imperfections of a human being, such as repentance and grief at His Own Actions, that He is All Wise, nothing not even a man's secret thoughts being hidden from Him, that He is strictly just, in the sense that He never makes the innocent suffer in the place of the guilty, that His Mercy towards His Creatures is beyond measure, that He has bestowed upon us various powers to be exercised properly, that He rewards those who do good according to His behests and punishes at His Will those who disobey Him, and work evil, that every individual is responsible for his or her own actions — no shifting of one's burden to the shoulders of another—and will have to render an account of them before Him on the day of judgment, that He has made known His Will through His Prophets and Books, the last book the Holy Qoran supplementing and superseding all previous books, and besides has made the last and the greatest of His Apostles, Hazrath Muhammad (God's peace and blessings on him, his progeny and his followers ') a model for mankind to imitate and follow, these are such simple articles of faith that even a child

Islam the natural religion

The simple and rational tenets of Islam

can understand and which require no hierarchy of priests to explain

It is obvious that all men are not endowed with equal powers and capabilities. Allah therefore expects only such work from every individual as is commensurate with his capacity. No master furnishing only a spade and a shovel to his servant will expect him to make a writing-table therewith nor one who furnishes only carpenter's tools expect a steam-engine to be turned out with them. The nature of the work to be done by a workman depends upon the number and nature of tools furnished to him. If all men were to confine themselves only to work for their bread, they would be no better than the lower animals, who also toil for their livelihood and care for nothing else. The higher powers conferred on man would then be superfluous. Non-utilization of power bestowed by Allah is equally culpable with its abuse. Both are reprehensible. In every action or process, there

The golden mean
of Islam

are two things to be avoided, over doing and under-doing. People generally are prone to err either way. In religion excess

leads to superstition and neglect gradually results in complete abandonment or bestial indifference. For instance the Christians in the Middle Ages shunned society and lived celibate lives in caves and monasteries, considering it a meritorious action. The tendency amongst the moderns is to completely ignore religion. Islam teaches us to follow the golden mean. A Muslim prays to Allah five times a day to guide him in the right path. By the 'right path' is meant this golden mean which lies between the two extremes. Every human being must have a definite aim in life and to accomplish that aim must have fixed principles of action. Life without any aim and

Man without religion,
a ship without a rudder

principles is the life of a wild animal. Such a person may be compared to a ship without a rudder tossed about in every direction by the waves and winds finally foundering to the bottom of the sea. Now what aim can be nobler and more suited to man than purifying himself and

rendering himself worthy and fit to approach the presence of his Maker ? Hence the necessity for religion. Islam enunciates all those necessary principles and teaches us how to purify ourselves, and reach the desired goal, or in other words to fulfil the object of our existence

Islam teaches us how to purify ourselves and fulfil the object of our existence

CHAPTER XXI

Lest any of the young readers of this book fall into the error of supposing that by 'purifying' is meant simply the washing of the body with soap and water and wearing clean clothes, it would not be a miss to add a few words to explain the term. Of course keeping the body and its coverings clean is not to be ignored or under valued as it forms part of the general purification. Cleanliness leads to godliness. Hence all Muslims are enjoined to keep their bodies and dress clean especially at times of prayer and to pray only in a clean place. But the purification here referred to is moral and spiritual purification. As the spirit is not a material object, nothing of a material nature can defile it. The All Wise Allah has created everything in pairs of contraries, such as Light and Darkness, Bitter and Sweet, Courage and Cowardice and so on. We understand the real nature of a thing by comparing it with its opposite. Had there been no darkness we could no sooner have understood or appreciated light. The same is the case with abstract qualities. The lower animals have no moral or spiritual nature. Instead they are furnished with what is known as Instinct which meets all their requirements and which they can by no means change. A tiger needs flesh for its sustenance you cannot feed him with grass. It would rather starve and die than eat it. A young duckling just out of the shell runs towards water and begins to swim over it, whereas a young chick hatched along with the duckling by the same mother hen stand aloof on the brink, and nothing can make it to take to water. The nature of the lower animals can never

The meaning of 'purification'

Animal instinct can never be changed

be changed. But the case of human beings is different. They can adapt themselves to varying circumstances. Some Brahmms of India live on vegetable diet, whereas the inhabitants of the polar regions have nothing but flesh and fish to live on. Similarly the moral nature of man is susceptible of a variety of changes.

Early training, environment and divers other factors operate on man to change his nature, and convictions. On account of this versatility man improves himself and on the other hand is also liable to err. There used to

The peculiar
moral code of the
Thugs.

live in this country in old times a class of men known as the Thugs, whose business it was to strangle to death as many human beings as they could lay their hands on and then appropriate their belongings. Their moral code was peculiar. "What horrible cruelty is it," they would argue "to let a man live after despoiling him of his means of subsistence and make him suffer want and misery all his life! Kill him first if you are humane and then when he is no longer in need of anything you may take all that he possessed." The human mind is a most

Thoughts may
sully or purify the
soul

wonderful thing. It can transcend angels if rightly used or may make a devil of a man if used wrongly. Hence the necessity for Divine Revelation. The Holy Quran teaches us plainly what actions are commendable in the sight of Allah and what are blameworthy. To shun the latter and adorn oneself with good actions is purifying the spirit. Not only actions but also thoughts may sully or purify the soul. To possess the right faith and do good action is the acme of perfection. Perhaps some reader may ask how good thoughts can purify the soul. Its converse is more clear and readily admitted by all viz, that evil thoughts lead to evil actions and thus contaminate the soul. So also good thoughts result in good actions and thus purify the soul. For instance if you always bear in mind that the Great Creator of the Universe is constantly watching you and is noticing every thing you do and that even your innermost thoughts are not hidden from Him, and that He is at all times nearer to

you than yourselves, this single idea if properly cultivated or kept up will no doubt prevent you from committing many a sin. You dare not defy Him and act against His commands in His very face. This in reality is the one true reason which prevents a good Muslim from doing evil action, even when no human eye is watching him and there is no fear of exposure or punishment. A story is told of a saint who convinced his wife how he remembered Allah *at all times*, in spite of his being engaged in manual work. A saint who lived with his wife and family of several children and had to work with his hands to earn a livelihood was once asked by his wife how it was possible for him to be *always* engaged in remembering Allah as he told her whilst he spent the greater part of his time in doing manual labour, eating, drinking, and attending to the calls of his children, just like other worldly men. She wanted to be convinced of the truth of his assertion by proof positive. The saint smiled and told her that she would get a reply from him, the next day. That evening he invited a few friends of his and for their entertainment called in a party of players and had a short drama enacted before them with music during the intervals. But before the play started he seated his wife on a chair in a corner and placing a cup of water full to the brim in the palm of her right hand told her that if a single drop of water should be spilt into the palm by her till the play was over she should consider herself as divorced from him. The poor lady sat there huddled up on the chair with cramped limbs with her mind engrossed with the cup of water and immobile as a statue, lest the water be spilt. The entertainment lasted for several hours and when at last it was over, he came up to his wife and seeing that not a drop had been spilt, removed the cup from her hand and embracing her with affection for her obedience and patience, asked her how she had enjoined the music and the play and which part she liked best. "Not a bit," said she "I neither heard the music nor watched the play." "Why, were you asleep all the while?" "Never a wink had I," said she, "though the

The story of a lady watching a cupful of water in her hand

whole drama was played before me and though my eyes mechanically looked at the scene and my ears heard the music, yet my mind was engrossed with watching the cup of water that I actually neither saw the play nor heard the music." "Well then, my dear, here is the answer to your question. As your mind was engrossed with the cup of water, the minds of all godly men are always absorbed in remembrance of their Creator. Though they work and eat and drink like all other men, they never for a moment forget the eternal Allpervading August Presence of their Maker. This mental occupation leaves them no time to indulge in earthly pleasure or grieve at any worldly vicissitude. Their stay in this world is like the stay of a person in prison; he goes into it as an unavoidable necessity and is impatient to get out as soon as he can. They mix with people and concern themselves with worldly affairs only to the extent, absolutely necessary to earn an honest livelihood and to discharge their social duties and wish with all their heart that it may all end as soon as possible for they have no permanent attachment to things worldly," said the saint and convinced his wife. This is the mental attitude of those in whom Love of Allah is strong and predominates over all other passions and it is one to which every Muslim may aspire and attain gradually. Let not the reader fall into the error of supposing that Islam teaches men to be selfish doing nothing lazy misanthropes shunning society. Far from it Allah the All-wise has said "Blessed be He in whose hand is the kingdom, for He is mighty over all! Who created death and life, *to try you, which of you, does best*, for He is the Mighty, the Forgiving."

The Holy Qoran
on the object of
man's creation

(The Holy Qoran 67: 1-2)

Thus the very object of our creation is to do our best, that is to work and not remain inactive. Elsewhere the Holy Qoran lays down "Verily in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the succession of night and day, are signs to those possessed of minds *who remember God standing and sitting or lying on their sides*

and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth,
'O Lord.' thou hast not created this in vain "

(The Holy Qoran 3 87)

In another place He makes mention with approbation of "Men whom neither merchandise nor selling divert from the remembrance of God "

(The Holy Qoran 24 37)

The meaning is obvious Muslims are permitted to carry on buying, selling or pursuing other avocations to earn an honest livelihood but are commanded to remember Allah and contemplate His works, standing, sitting or even lying on their sides, that is in all circumstances. The Holy Prophet has said, "The best among mankind is he who does most good to his fellow men" A certain follower of his on hearing a sermon was so strongly impressed with the fear of appearing before

The Holy Prophet's advice to some of his followers regarding devotion

Allah and rendering an account of his actions, that he began to fast continuously for months and to stand up in prayer whole nights, neglecting all other work His wife went up to the Holy Prophet and brought to his notice how her husband had been engaged night and day in devotion and neglected her and her children The Holy Prophet sent for him and advised him to curtail his devotions to a third part of the night He told him that his (followers) body, his wife, his children his friends and neighbours, all had claims upon him and that their claims should not be overlooked but should be met with cheerfully and willingly He referred him to the following verse of the Holy Qoran "Allah desires for you what is easy and desires not for you what is difficult "

(The Holy Qoran 2 181)

Some other wished to give up eating strengthening food and to castrate themselves so that they may not be bothered with carnal desires and devote themselves exclusively to devotion but the Holy Prophet prevented

Muslims allowed to enjoy all lawful pleasures in moderation.

their doing so Islam does not require people to nullify God's gifts by destroying them We have seen above that not using Allah's gifts is as bad as abusing or misusing them It permits them to eat and drink all the good tasteful things created by Allah for the use of mankind excepting the things specifically prohibited, provided they do not indulge in excess As for sexual desires a Muslim is not required either to castrate himself or lead a celibate life, for that would be acting against the will of the Creator he is only required to keep it under perfect control and not go beyond what is allowed to him by law The merit lies in obtaining perfect mastery over his passions and not in totally exterminating them As remarked by a Persian wit what can a Police Officer dismissed for corruption do but remain honest ? What merit can a castrated person claim in being chaste ? Islam enjoins mankind to subjugate their passions to their judgment and not become slaves to them, to be clean in body and mind, to work for their livelihood, to be kind and helpful to all that is be good citizens, and steadfast in prayers to Allah and *always* remembering Him in mind whatever work their hands may be doing

The writer's recommendation to readers to adopt a certain beneficial habit

The writer strongly recommends to all readers of this book to keep up in their minds always the idea that their Creator is near them and is watching all their actions and thoughts They will themselves feel the immense good they would derive by keeping up this idea, which would not require any great exertion on their part There is a proverb in English that the devil is the idle man's companion This is perfectly true The human mind is ever active it knows no rest As our lungs and hearts are working incessantly whether we will it or not, so is the human mind always thinking of something or other The devil takes advantage of the ignorance of people and prompts them to work out some mischief or at least engages them in some useless pastime or frolic to waste their time, which could have been more profitably used. We should remember that our stay on earth

is only for a limited period and that with each breath we are hastening towards the end and lost time is never recovered. Wise people use their time to their best advantage. They spend it in acquiring useful knowledge in doing good works and in remembering Allah, so that not a breath of theirs is lost without benefit to them.

The following saying is current amongst Muslims and is attributed to the Holy Prophet. It appears that on a certain day Satan sat upon his throne and called upon his deputies and lieutenants to render an account of what harm and mischief each of them had done to mankind during the day. One of them with a malevolent countenance advanced and said: "My liege! for the last several months I was trying to accomplish the ruin of a holy monk who had relinquished the world and its pleasures and spent all his time in worshipping Allah. He was too wary for me but after repeated failures today I succeeded with the aid of a female disciple of his, in despoiling him of his, fifty years long chastity. I made her appear to him ravishingly beautiful and he fell a victim to her blandishments. Gone is his sanctity for ever and my efforts have been at last crowned with success. Satan heard the account and wagged his head. The next devil reported that he had created a row in the bazaar regarding a trifling dispute which grew into a riot and culminated in half-a-dozen deaths and in serious injuries to a dozen men. Satan again wagged his head. A third devil detailed how he had supervised the workings of a gang of decoits and prompted them to commit plunder, arson, rape and several murders in a village. Several other devils rendered accounts of similar actions prompted by them and all resulting in mischief and loss to different men. Satan heard all these accounts in grim silence. At last a slender imp with shifting eyes and trembling limbs advanced and bowing before the throne begged pardon of Satan saying that he had not been able to render him any meritorious service like his colleagues and that all he could do that day was to make a

Satan's reckoning
with his assistants

crowd of youngsters play the truant from their school and engaged them in play till they all lost their lessons for the day. He prayed to be pardoned for this meagre work and promised to do better in future. Satan as soon as he heard the account jumped up and rushing to the imp hugged him to his breast and kissed him and extolled his work as the most valuable of all the services rendered the day by the whole diabolic community. "My worthy friends and co-worker," said he, "remember that ignorance is the worst calamity that can befall mankind. It is the mother of all mischief and woe. Let men but continue in ignorance and they will in time certainly become our efficient co-adjutors. If men commit sin there is always the hope that Allah out of His Great Compassion may pardon them; all our promptings to sinners to commit sin shall then have been in vain. But for ignorance there is no remedy. Cherish ignorance amongst mankind as our most valuable asset and use your utmost power and skill to spread it amongst our natural enemies the mankind." This story is inserted here to impress upon young readers the value and importance of learning. The devil cannot enter into a heart wherein Allah's remembrance is constantly kept alive. By keeping up God's remembrance the devil's entry into the heart is barred, as air cannot force itself into a vessel full of water. Remove the water and the air rushes in to take its place, so Satan seizes the opportunity whenever Allah's remembrance is forgotten and rushes in. With his entry arise all evil thoughts the desires of the flesh are stimulated and the evil propensities in human nature are accentuated and gradually overcome the angelic impulses. If this state of things continues long enough these latter are entirely overpowered and crushed beneath the weight of animality and devilry combined. Such hearts are spoken of in the Holy Quran as being 'sealed'. By the simple practice of remembering Allah in one's mind at all times, this dreadful calamity may be averted.

A good action
acts as a counter
poise to a bad one.

That is the reason why the Holy Quran advises people if they ever happen to commit a sinful act by forgetfulness or otherwise

immediately to repent and remember Allah and ask His forgiveness and perform some virtuous and benevolent act as a counterpoise to the sinful one

If the remembrance of Allah be kept up you will feel yourself strong and well-protected at all times. No danger can appal you no calamity upset the equilibrium of your mind, you cannot have the temerity to commit any sinful act in the face of your Creator nor can you run into orgasms of rage or passion in His presence. If at any time an evil idea should happen to enter your mind, His remembrance would be the best weapon to drive it away. In short the benefits of keeping up alive of this blessed idea that Allah is always with you are too numerous to be detailed and the writer strongly urges upon readers the desirability of adopting this habit. In a short time they will appreciate the value of this advice

Benefits accruing
from the remem-
brance of Allah.

CHAPTER XXII

The unbiased reader of this book if an anxious seeker after truth will have by this time made out that no other mortal has done so much good to his fellow mortals as the Holy Prophet Haziath Muhammad (God's peace and blessings on him!) and that the religion taught by him has not only survived the vituperative attacks and malicious aspersions of its enemies but it is also daily gaining converts to it from amongst the learned and well educated classes in Europe and elsewhere. This is one proof of its solid worth and truth. Another proof is furnished by the vast number of Holy saints that have flourished amongst the Muslims. They number millions. The following is a translation of an article that appeared in Tahzib-e-Niswan an Urdu Weekly paper published at Lahore dated the 4th November 1933. This paper is mainly intended for women. Its readers and contributors are mostly females. A certain lady who along with other members of her family was touring in the Hedjaz, Iraq, and other Muslim

A tree known by
its fruit

countries sent an account of what she personally witnessed at Baghdad, to the paper for publication and it was published. The substance of contribution is as follows

‘ Salman e pak is about forty miles from Baghdad. Motor cars can go up to it. At this sacred place several companions of the Holy Prophet had acted as Governors from time to time. Its ancient name was Madain. Here under a dome in a grand mausoleum is situated the sepulchre of Hazrath Salman e - Farsi. (The reader must be informed that the last named saint was a noted companion of the Holy Prophet, who served under him in several wars and whom the Holy Prophet honoured by calling ‘a member of my house-hold’ such was the esteem in which he held him) In two rooms recently added to the mausoleum rest separately the bodies of two other companions of the Holy Prophet viz Hazrath Huziefatul Fmani and Jabei bin Abdullah. These two bodies were originally interred at a place about two furlongs distant from the present site. It was our good fortune to witness the transfer of these two bodies to the present graves. It happened in the following manner. Hazrath Huziefa appeared in a dream to His Majesty King Feisal sovereign of Iraq and expressed a wish that both his body and that of Hazrath Jabei should be removed from their graves and buried at some distance from the rivers as the water was penetrating into their graves. His Majesty issued a proclamation that the two bodies would be exhumed on the afternoon of the Id uzzuha day which was fast approaching but numerous protests were received from the Muslims of the neighbouring countries, Turkey, Russia, Palestine, Persia, Syria, Egypt &c, that the exhumation should be done a few days later to enable them to witness it. It was accordingly postponed for a few days. Muslims began to pour in, in vast numbers from different countries. At last on a Monday ten days after the festival at 11 a m the

A most remarkable
miracle of two
Muslim saints at
Baghdad companions
of the Holy
Prophet

bodies of both the saints were exhumed in presence of several lakhs of on lookers. Some water had actually penetrated into the grave of the first saint and the earth in that of Hazrath Jabeel had become wet, though the river was at a distance of two furlongs. His Majesty King Feisal, members of the Parliament of Iraq, and all the ambassadors of other kingdoms were present. First the body of Hazrath Huziefah was taken out by His Majesty, the Grand Mufti of Iraq, Vizier Mokhtar of the Turkish Republic and Prince Farookh the heir-apparent of Egypt. Then the body of Hazrath Jabeel was taken out by the same persons. Both the bodies even the hair of the beards and the shrouds were fresh and quite unaffected by time. But the most wonderful fact was that the eyes of both the saints were bright and sparkling at which many eminent doctors were astounded. The bodies were then placed in beautiful new coffins the Iraquan army presented arms and salutes were fired from cannon. Then the vast crowd performed the Muslim funeral service over both the bodies anew, and as they were being borne by kings, ambassadors and princes, several aeroplanes presented arms and offered salutes and a continuous shower of flowers kept up." Then she describes with what grandeur and military honours, both the bodies were consigned to their new graves, how millions of people watched the scene and some thousands of Jews and Christians, a German doctor among them became Muslim on the spot, on seeing this wonderful miracle of Islam. The readers must be informed that these saints had died only a few years after the Holy Prophet's demise or approximately thirteen hundred years ago. Just consider the blessings and this undeniable proof of the truth of Islam. Had not Islam been a true religion and the Holy Prophet a real messenger of Allah, his disciples and followers would never have obtained this pre-eminence this ascendancy of the soul over the body. The soul is indestructable and never perishes. We have already seen that it is the soul that preserves the body. When

it gains complete ascendancy over the body, the body also shares the properties of the soul. Non-Muslim readers must be here informed that Muslims never enclose their dead bodies in a wooden or lead coffin. It is seldom that a wooden coffin is placed *over* the body to prevent earth from falling over it but this box like coffin has no bottom and the back of the corpse is always in contact with mother earth with nothing between it and the body. Nor are the bodies embalmed as in ancient Egypt. Is it not a most wonderful fact that the human body should remain intact and fresh in a grave for thirteen centuries? If this is the spiritual achievement of disciples what must be that of the Master who trained them? How then can one doubt the truth of the Holy Prophet's bodily ascent to Heaven for a few minutes? Which is the more wonderful phenomenon of the two viz ascending to heaven under the influence of the spirit and returning to earth in a few short minutes or a dead body remaining buried in the earth for thirteen long centuries without suffering the least change? Apart from these two saints, bodies of numerous other saints have been known to remain unaffected for centuries amongst the Muslims, some of them can be seen even on the present day. This is perhaps one reason why cremation is not allowed in Islam.

One reason why
cremation is not
allowed in Islam

Allah says in the Holy Quran 3: 164-165, "Count not those who are killed in the way of God as dead, but (they are) living with their Lord provided for (literally 'are being nourished') rejoicing in what God has brought them of His Grace, and being glad for those who have not reached them yet — those left behind them, there is no fear for them, and they shall not be grieved, glad at favour from God and grace, and that God wasteth not the hire of the believers." From this it is clear that those who are killed in the way of God should not be considered dead as other men die but as alive with God, being nourished according to their requirements, and

Those who die in
the way of Allah
are alive

rejoicing thereat. Now being killed in the way of Allah, is not only being killed in sacred warfare but also includes several other kinds of death, for instance being killed on one's way to perform the Hajj & etc. It is no wonder then that innumerable Muslims who passed away from the domain of the living are found intact in their graves though years have rolled on over them without count.

The writer is aware that generally people are prone to exaggerate miracles or supposed miracles performed by their co-religious saints. Two other miracles will be detailed here to which hundreds nay thousands of men can testify and there can be no doubt whatever of their reality.

In the Municipal Town of Ellore, Godavari West District within the old fort, there is an old tomb of a Muslim saint, known as Haziath Syed Bayazid. Tradition says he was an Arab, but nobody knows when and whence he came to Ellore and when he passed away. A sect of the Hindus known as Kathies professional dyers of cloth who lived close by were devoted to the tomb making occasional offerings to the saint and taking out a procession in his honour at the anniversary of his demise, commonly called the 'Uroos'. A poor Musselman used to live close by. Whenever people brought offerings of sugar, sweetmeats, and fruit & etc., he used to read the Fateha (recitation of some verses of the Holy Quran and Du'a wood) over the gifts and to return them to the donors, receiving for his services a portion of the gifts and a copper coin or two. A person thus officiating at a shrine is called its 'Mujaver'. This particular Mujaver married a woman but though several years passed away he was not blest with any offspring. Frequent were his supplications and prayers to Allah to give him a child. At last after several long years his wife conceived and in course of time gave birth to a child. But the child was sexless. It had neither the organs of a male nor those of a female. It only had a small aperture for the passage of urine. Great

A sexless child
converted into a
girl

was the grief and worry of the parents on observing this defect. Several hundreds of people examined the child and said that no sexual organs were formed at all and that there was no remedy known to man to cure the defect. At last the parents called in the Civil Apothecary in charge of the Municipal Hospital and sought his advice. He examined the child carefully and methodically and pronounced the case hopeless. He said that at times a thin membrane would cover the private part of a female child and on opening it with a surgeon's knife the organ that was hid by the membrane would appear but that in the case of the child under observation the organ had not *formed* at all nor was there any membrane covering it. He added that human ingenuity could never supply such defect. This added to the worry of the parents who grew hopeless. A few days later one night the father looking at the child shed tears of pity over it as it was lying asleep on its bed and subsequently went to bed himself grieving over its hard lot. Towards morning he had a dream. He saw that he was going along a road carrying his baby in his arms. An old man of holy appearance was seated under a tree by the road side and asked him where he was carrying the baby. He explained matters to him and said that the Medical Officer at Ellore had pronounced the defect incurable, he was taking the baby for examination by the District Surgeon at Rajahmundry. The old man smiled, and mildly rebuked him, saying, "You have been thinking of consulting this doctor and that doctor but have never once thought of me, though I am close to your house." So saying he took the child into his own arms and hugging it to his breast for a minute handed it back to the father and disappeared. When the father awoke early in the morning what was his surprise and joy to see that the child had a female organ just like any other girl in quite a normal shape and condition. He ran up to the doctor and fetched him. The doctor was dumb-founded when he saw the child and said that no human hands could have brought on the change. The news flew about like wild-fire and thousands of the inhabitants of the town witnessed the

miracle That child grew up into a girl and was duly married in time She is now a grown up matron bearing children She is living at her own native place, Ellore This wonderful miracle was wrought some thirty years ago a few years more or less, at Ellore Those interested may make personal enquiries in that town and satisfy themselves of the truth of the anecdote Since this strange happening, the fame of the saint has spread far and wide A magnificent mausoleum has been erected over his sepulchre and his annual Uroos is carried on with great splendour Every day in the year hundreds of votaries Muslims and Hindus resort to the saint's sepulchre with offerings and on Thursdays and Fridays the crowds are immense

For the benefit of such readers as suppose that death terminates a man's existence and that there is no such thing as the soul surviving the body the writer's personal experience with this saint is here recorded without any exaggeration or a particle of untruth and with the earnest hope that they may be convinced of their error May Allah lead all readers of this book into the right faith ! When the writer was a lad about ten years of age, he was a student in the Mission School situated in the old dilapidated fort at Ellore In those days there were no buildings within the fort except the school-house, the residence of the Head Master, a European, and a small cottage in which an Indian pastor lived The gates of the fort would be closed at night-fall and there was no thoroughfare in it, so that nobody went into the fort after dark Near the solitary tomb of the saint situated at one end, there stood two tall date-trees which bore clusters of nice sweet fruit during the season As the trees were tall nobody could reach the fruit but every day a few ripe dates would drop on the ground from the clusters and to pick them up several school boys the writer among them, used to visit the spot once or twice every day. This formed into a habit and boys

The writer's personal experience with the saint at Ellore

used to assemble at the spot during the recess hour daily and sit there chit-chatting till the school-bell rang. But when the fruit season was over, the boys dropped off one by one and the writer was the only person to go there regularly every day and sit at the foot of the tomb for hours. There was an attractoin and an impulse to visit the tomb, which the writer could not resist. In course of time, it grew so strong that the writer used to get up from his bed at nights and steal out of the house like a thief when all were asleep and run up to the tomb and sit there for hours in utter darkness without any fear, all alone. Sometimes overcome by sleep he used to lie down and sleep by the side of the grave and spend whole nights there going back home early in the morning with cramped limbs on account of the dew falling over him and benumbing him. What was the cause for these visits? As often as the writer would go up to the grave and sit near it a sort of mental dialogue would be carried on all about religion. Numerous were the explanations which the holy saint offered in making him understand some of the tenets of Islam. No person nor the shadow of a person ever appeared to him nor was any voice heard. The whole process was mental. The mind distinctly heard the questions and gave replies without moving the tongue or the lips. One or two examples will be given here. Upon one occasion something like the following dialogue took place.

The Saint My dear boy are you ever afraid to see people die? What do you think about death? Do you grieve for those that die or do you rejoice at their death?

Controversy about death.

The writer How, Sir, can death be a cause for rejoicing, seeing that as soon as a person dies, it is all over with him? He leaves all his friends, his pastimes, his pleasures and all his possessions behind. He can no more eat nice fruit, nor enjoy a game of cricket, nor read any interesting story

books His life terminates and he is buried all alone in a dark tomb, heaps of earth are thrown over him and in a few days his body also turns into dust The very appearance of a dead man is terrifying and I for my part run away from a place where it is kept

The Saint My dear lad you are greatly mistaken in thinking that life *terminates* with death It only assumes a new phase and continues to exist

The Writer How can life continue Sir, without the body?

The Saint Do you never see any dead relation or friend of yours in dreams, whose body was buried long ago? The body, you see in the dream is not the identical body which he had during life as it has become dust though it is very much like it

The Writer Yes, Sir, I can understand it but what reason is there for rejoicing at death?

The Saint Listen, I will explain it to you Several years ago, you had no existence at all in the world Then you came into the back of your father in the shape of a drop of water You remained there for some time, in that state till you were transferred into your mother's womb and there you remained for a few months, the original drop of water growing gradually into a foetus When your little body was fit to come into the outer world you came out as an infant You have grown since into a boy and are continually growing at present, You will in course of time grow into a man and will

Death to be
rejoiced at and not
to be afraid of

become old and when the time comes for it, you will have to leave the world. Consider how many changes you have undergone. But have you remarked that in every one of the changes you have gained something and never lost anything? To become a drop of water is becoming better than being nothing, to become a foetus is better than being a drop, then an infant is better than a foetus, a boy is greater than an infant and so on. Each successive stage made you better and more important than in its preceding one. You gained power and knowledge and many other things which you did not possess before. By analogy you will gain such powers and knowledge after death as you never possessed before. Is not this then cause for rejoicing at and courting timely death, as you rejoice on being promoted to a higher class in the school every year? Now that you have witnessed the beauties of the present world and tasted some of its pleasures, would you like to go back into the womb stage once more? You will certainly not like it. So every one who has passed the death-stage will never care to come back into this world, leaving the privileges and pleasures of the spirit-world. Keep this fact in your mind always that death makes a man greater than what he was in his life so that death really is a matter to rejoice at as you rejoice at your class-promotion at school. Try then to lead as good a life as you can and work hard to gain this spiritual promotion after death as you work hard at your studies to gain the annual class promotion,

Not less interesting was the following lesson given on another occasion

Talk with the saint
about 'Takhdeer' or
predetermination

The Saint You must have often heard of people talking about Allah's 'Takhder' (predestination) what do you understand about it?

The Writer Really, Sir I know nothing about it. But when people talk of 'Takhdeer,' whenever any thing remarkable, good or bad, happens, I suppose they mean it was the will of Allah that the thing should happen that way.

The Saint You are only partly right for nothing can ever happen in the world against the will of Allah, but you have not fully understood the meaning of the word. I will explain it to you. Do you know how your school-house was built?

The Writer Why, Sir the architect constructed it and it came into existence.

The Saint Yes, but what did the architect do before constructing the house?

The Writer I suppose he collected materials for building the house.

The Saint Yes, he collected materials but what did he do even before collecting materials?

The Writer I cannot think Sir what else he did before that.

The Saint Cannot you imagine that at first he must have formed a plan of the proposed build in his mind determining the dimensions of the building and locating of the several rooms doors, windows and halls it was to have. Then he must have delineated that mental plan on paper and set workmen to construct the building according to the paper plan

The writer Yes, Sir I can understand that no building can be constructed without a specific plan of it

The Saint You are right now if you think that the architect of such a small building as your school house found it necessary to form a plan in his mind before constructing it, can you think that the Great Architect who brought into existence this vast Universe with its numerous rivers, seas, mountains &c, did it without a pre-conceived plan?

The Writer No, Sir I cannot think so. He must have certainly formed a plan in His mind before creating it

The Saint Well then understand that by Takhdeer is meant Allah's pre conception of the Universe. According to His mental plan, so to speak, everything has happened, is happening and will happen till the Doomsday. Nothing can ever happen in a way different from His original plan. This is what is meant by the saying that decrees of fate are fixed and unchangeable

Some misconception seem to exist regarding predestination. Some people think that every action that occurs in the world is pre-ordained.

by Allah independently of the human agency that brought it about, that is whether the person that commits an act will it or not, the action will occur

Others think that Allah has nothing to do with actions of men and that human beings are entirely free to act as they please. Both these are extremes and are wrong. Islam teaches us a golden mean. Man is free in his choice of action but lacks the power to act. He is beholden to Allah for the power. If a person intends to perform a good act, Allah gives him the power to perform it. If however the man intends to commit an evil action Allah lends him power likewise. He does not compel the man to act one way or the other against his will. Man is punished or rewarded on account of his choice. In either case Allah has the fore knowledge what action a particular person will commit. Both the above-mentioned theses are wrong as the one would make of Allah an arbitrary tyrant and the other would make him helpless and ignorant of what will occur in the world. This is a difficult question and should not be needlessly probed into by every one. The Holy Prophet has advised his followers not to handle subjects which they do not understand. It is sufficient for us to try always to do good acts if possible and avoid evil.

Let psychologists explain how such ideas could have occurred to a lad of ten, who had no knowledge of the world, of books or of religion whatever. At that time the writer had not read the Holy Qoran nor the Traditions of the Holy Prophet nor any religious book, and had never pondered over such abstruse problems. Being then a pupil in the third or fourth form of a High School, all that he had read was a few primary readers in Urdu and English. There is no way of accounting for this than by admitting that soul of a holy person did exist and did put these ideas into the writer's mind. Otherwise the phenomena remains inexplicable. Though the writer has shown only two samples of the dialogues he had with

the saint, it must be noted that this tuition continued for considerable length of time. It ceased only after the writer left the town.

There are several other experiences of the writer each and every one of them to say the least remarkable which will be detailed in a separate chapter.

There is a small Zemindari village of the name of 'Kasmoor'. It is about fourteen miles from Nellore, which is a railway station. There is another smaller station called Venkatachalam from which Kasmoor is only five miles distant, but the mail train does not stop there. At this village Kasmoor, there is the sepulchre of a Muslim Saint, known as Hazarath Syed Karim-ullah Shah Khadaree, alias, Kale M^sstan or Kale Shah. This saint is famous for exorcising devils. Persons possessed by evil spirits and demons of all varieties flock at his sepulchre. If a demoniac goes round and round the shrine in a few minutes the devil or the genie that possesses him or her comes up and explains who or what he is when he took possession of the patient and whether he will leave the person possessed or not. In some cases the evil spirit asks for time, say month a couple of months or a half year to go away. In other cases it demands some animals such as buffaloes, goats, or sheep, clothes, garlands of flowers, coconuts, betel leaves, plantains and similar things as gifts before going away. But the saint cuts down the demand to few plantains and a coconut or two in the case of poor people, or a goat or a sheep in the case of the rich. The saint holds a real controversy with the demon. Of course the onlookers do not hear the voice of the saint but from the nature of the answers given to him by the demoniac the questions of the saint are easily guessed. The demoniacs say that they hear the saint's voice distinctly when he asks questions though it is inaudible to others. In some cases however the demon refused to leave the patient under any circumstances and goes on abusing and defying the saint and bidding him to his worst. The saint then makes the patients run

Hazarath Kale
Shah of Kasmoor

round his sepulchre at full speed for hours together till at last the patient falls down exhausted and begins to beg pardon of the Saint. In some cases he makes the patients roll on the ground with their hands and feet shackled. The shackles however do not appear to the onlookers but the patient's hands and feet are crossed one over the other and are held so firmly in an invisible grip that the patient cannot disunite them try hard as he could. In that condition the patient rolls on the ground round and round the shrine. In other cases the patients cry, and roar like bulls in agony beseeching the saint not to burn them and crying out that their interiors were all on fire, and that the torture was unbearable. The writer witnessed several patients throw themselves into a well or tank to die being unable to bear the torture, they were however rescued by their relations and onlookers. Year in year out one can witness such scenes from early morning till about midnight every day. On Thursdays and Fridays the concourse of demoniacs and patients is very large. On occasions the shrine looks like pandemonium with demoniacs shrieking howling jumping making somersets dancing beating their breasts striking their heads against the earth or the walls making loud lamentations and similar uncouth actions. The writer once saw a woman make somersets in the air in front of the shrine continuously from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. breathing hard and panting the perspiration dripping and her dishevelled hair hanging loose from her head. These feats and lamentation occur, not only within the shrine but also in the streets and houses adjoining it to a considerable distance. The wonder is that the saint carries on dialogues and questions and answers with each and every patient at one and the same time though there may be several dozens of them in different localities. Some patients are cured within a few days, a week or ten days, but others take a longer term a few month. There are some demoniacs under treatment for a couple of years, this is specially the case with those who are possessed by a number of devils. But sooner or later all are eventually cured. When an

evil spirit is about to leave a person it makes the patient go round and round the grave making promises of never repossessing and handling fire with both his hands for a considerable time. Then the patient lies down on the ground just like one dead. This condition lasts for an hour or two and after that the patient gets up quite exhausted and a changed person. He cannot recollect what he said or did when the evil spirit was upon him. Apart from demoniacs, a large number of people suffering from bodily ailments, such as incurable ulcers of long standing, chronic emaciation, palsy, abnormal distension of the abdomen, congestion of the liver, phthisis and similar complaints resort to the shrine and most of them are cured. Even maniacs regain their wits. They are not given any medicine beyond a few grains of sandal mixed earth from the tomb of the saint or of ashes from the brazier of the saint, in which incense is burnt, to swallow and in cases of shrunken or swollen limbs, ulcers &c, a little oil from his lamp for rubbing or external application as the case may be. The writer has personally witnessed numerous cases in which bed-ridden patients were brought to the shrine and they left it hale and hearty in a few days. Some of the patients say that in their sleep they were carried to the saint's hospital and there underwent surgical operations and were made to swallow medicines, the taste of which sometimes bitter sometimes sweet remained in their mouths even after waking and they began to mend and their sores or tumours disappeared. In short there is no variety of disease which the saint does not treat and cure. The saint appears to many of his patients in their dreams and advises them to perform particular actions, such as making a sacrifice of an animal or feeding the poor. In some doomed cases and these are very few the saint declines to treat the patients and tells them to leave his shrine as he could do them no good. He either bids them go away or shows them a sign of hopelessness, such as a coffin or a shroud or a grave being dug. Such patients, whether they leave the shrine or stay on invariably die within a short time, a few days, week or even less. They never recover. The writer has lived in the village and

has been a constant visitor at the shrine for more than a year and has personally witnessed all that he has written about and there is not a particle of exaggeration or untruth in the statements he has made herein. It is difficult to surmise how these facts will be received by the readers. Some perhaps may believe them to be true and these will form the minority. But the majority will try to account for them in various ways. Some may think that all this is trickery to collect money from the patients, but this is obviously wrong for there is nobody to ask for or receive it. There is no question of demand or payment. The principal actor, the saint paid his debt to nature upwards of a century ago, and it is his spirit that has been doing this good work ever since. He had no wife nor children, nor other dependents to be provided for by him. Nor is there any middleman between the saint and the patient. The latter goes up direct to the sepulchre and explains his case and asks for his aid. But if the patient be unable to do it himself, his relations or friends will do it for him. Nobody at the shrine asks for money. Occasionally the saint expresses his wish that the poor hungry hangers on of whom there are always a number present, may be fed. Of course this is a work of charity and the saint is not personally concerned with it and if he ever advises a patient to sacrifice a goat or a sheep the mutton is distributed then and there amongst the poor. Such being the case the question of money does not crop up at all. Some readers may suppose that it is all the work of imagination and faith. The patient fancies himself to be possessed by an evil spirit and believes that the saint can cure him. With this idea firmly fixed in his mind he resorts to him and in course of time accordingly cured by his faith. This may sound plausible enough in some ears but it is rather drawing too much upon imagination. It is true that faith is essential in all such cases whether treated spiritually by a saint or medicinally by a doctor of medicine but the action of faith is limited. To hold that a person imagines himself possessed by a devil, there being no devil in reality, and that there is no spirit of the saint at all but that the imagination of the patient conjures up one and

ancies it to be that of the saint and holds converse with it and handles fire without feeling it, that the patient undergoes bodily tortures unbearable and throws himself into a well to die to escape them and then gradually gets better until he is thoroughly cured of his disease or mania all by force of imagination is rather too tall an order upon it and is against all human experience. How can imagination make fire inert and suspend its natural function of burning? Medical science shows that maniacs and those suffering from mental diseases are subject sometimes to very strange hallucinations, but then there is always a limit to them. No patient can handle fire with impunity by merely imagining that he is handling roses and not, ^{like} fire. No patient under a hallucination that he is a bird and not a human being, can with the aid of his imagination actually fly about in space like a bird. Perceptions of imagination are confined to abstract notions and do not extend to concrete objects so as to mar their natural properties. Any one watching the patients, their discourses and their actions will scout the idea that what he witnesses is all due to perverted imagination of the patients. Many of them are such as possess no imagination at all. Young children, old beldames, semi idiots and such like patients are incapable of any long flights of imagination. The large number and variety of patients negative the idea of shamming. Hindus, Muslims, Parsees, Malas, Madigas, Upperas, Wodders and people of many other classes as also men and women of all ages, old dotards, middle aged men and women, young men young women and even little children of tender ages will all be found among the patients. How can it be supposed that the brains of all these patients are affected alike and they are all victims of hallucination, their sufferings being only imaginary? No one who watches the scenes can for a moment imagine that the sufferings are anything but real. People lying flat on their faces on floors of mortar and stone-paved in the midday sun and running round, and round the shrine with bare blistered feet for hours cannot certainly be shamming. And wherefore should there be any shamming at all? What is it which the patients gain by their shamming,

except blistered feet and aching limbs? There being no money making and no adequate motive for the patients to be play acting, the only rational explanation is that the evil spirits are really possessing the patients and torturing them and that the saint really drives out the mischief-makers. One need but watch the scene to be convinced of its reality. In some cases the saint has appeared in dreams, and instructed people who had never heard of him or of his power to exorcise devils, to take their demon-possessed relations to his shrine at Kasmoor, saying that they would be cured by going to him. And so it happened in fact. The writer knows two such cases personally. Certainly this could not have been a freak of imagination. The writer has made mention of two such miracles worked by Muslim saints, as are capable of verification by any one. The one worked at Ellore will be testified to by hundreds of eye witnesses. As for the miracles being worked at Kasmoor, no witnesses are required. They are being worked every day throughout the year. Those interested may visit the shrine and judge for themselves. The miracle of the two companions of the Holy Prophet at Baghdad whose bodies were exhumed and found to be intact though buried in the earth for thirteen centuries has been already mentioned and is equally capable of verification by one interested in the matter. All the miracles mentioned herein are such that they leave no room for doubt. They have been worked by followers of the Holy Prophet, avowed Muslims. If the followers and disciples of a Master can work such wonders what cannot the Master do?

Hazrat Omar the second Caliph on the Holy Prophet's demise is said to have drawn out his sword and brandishing it to have cried out "If any one should say that the Holy Prophet has died he will be beheaded by me." It is generally supposed that this great calamity that befel him upset his mind and he uttered those words in a perturbed mental condition and should not therefore be taken seriously. But having regard to the exceptional

Hayatun nabi and
Hayat-e abadee

nerve and stamina of Hazrath Omar the supposition does not commend itself to the writer. It cannot be imagined that a person of his mental calibre uttered words without sense or did not know what he was talking about. No, he knew it well enough and he was perfectly right in what he said. We Muslims believe in 'hayatun-nabi' or the eternal life of the Holy Prophet. We do not believe that prophets of Allah especially the prince of them can die as common people die. We believe that he is alive in his sepulchre and sees and hears all those that visit his tomb and replies to their salutations. Many persons have heard his reply to a Muslim's salutation. We believe that his body is no longer in need of material sustenance and if any spiritual food is needed it is supplied by Allah as stated in the Holy Quran. When a prophet of Allah or even a saintly Muslim ceases to breathe the air of this world we Muslims do not say that he *Died*, on the contrary we say he attained *everlasting life* (hayat e-abadee). It was in this sense that Hazrath Omar used those words. He meant that the Holy Prophet did not die like other ordinary people but that his death was of the nature referred to in the Holy Quran chapter 3, verses 164-165, quoted above.

CHAPTER XXIII

Whilst writing about miracles and spiritual aids rendered by holy departed saints to their fellow mortals, the writer cannot resist the impulse to note down some of his own personal experiences since his childhood and leave the readers to draw their own inferences. His object in doing so is to render his humble and heart-felt thanks to the Merciful Allah who directed him into the right path. The Holy Quran chapter 93 verse 11 lays down "and as for the favour of thy Lord discourse thereof," that is talk about it to others and proclaim it so as to let them understand how great has been the favour of Allah shown to thee, and be grateful to Him and sing His praises. Indeed what can Man tender to Allah in acknowledgment

Some Personal
experiences of the
writer

of His continued patronage and multifarious mercies bestowed from time to time upon him but his sincere gratitude and love ? Let the readers be assured that it is no feeling of egotism or self aggrandisement that prompts the writer to record what he is about to do. Allah is the best knower of the innermost secrets of every one's heart there is no deceiving Him.

A story is recorded of a person who became famous for his piety and devotion. He was almost always fasting and was night and day engaged in prayers and recital of the Holy Qoran. His fame as a holy person became so great that people praised him profusely before the Holy Prophet. The latter on hearing of the piety and good work done by one of his followers was much pleased and expressed a desire to see him. But when he appeared in his presence the Holy Prophet wonderingly exclaimed how is it that I smell the odour of Hell ? Those present were also astonished at it. The Holy Prophet then questioned him minutely as to how he was offering his devotions and with what motives. The man replied right enough that he did it all to win the favour of Allah and with that view in mind he abstained from all evil. The Holy Prophet considered for a moment and asked him whether or not he had a secret feeling lurking in his heart of hearts that he was superior to all other men on account of his greater piety and devotion. The man confessed he had such a feeling. The Holy Prophet advised him to root it out, as soon as he could, as that one thought of vanity was destroying all his good work as a single spark of fire consumes a whole stack and was dragging him towards hell. This anecdote is mentioned here to warn readers against a feeling of vanity or self-praise. Besides expressing his gratitude, the writer hopes that other seekers after truth may derive encouragement and benefit from listening to the experiences of a fellow-mortal. And above all the purity and truth of Islam will incidentally be brought home to them.

When the writer was a young lad he was a student in the Mission School at Ellore, where there was a special teacher, an Indian Convert, to teach the Bible to Muslim boys. This teacher was in the habit of discussing religion with the boys of his class, making attacks on Islam and on the Holy Prophet. He used also to quote the Holy Qoran in support of his contentions. Of course we youngsters, not having studied the Holy Qoran nor any other religious book were quite unable to argue with him successfully. But we had a Persian teacher a very learned and pious Muslim. We would relate to him the arguments used by the Bible Master and the quotations from the Holy Qoran he made. The Persian Teacher would point out to us the entire verses in question, which when read as a whole conveyed quite a different meaning. We knew then that matters were being minced and we were being misled. But the daily preachings and the crafty arguments of the Bible Master threw the writer's mind into confusion. In addition to this there were some students in the higher classes whose tendencies were atheistic. They were great admirers of Charles Bradlaugh, Ingersall, Annie Besant and other free-thinkers. Such students used to repeat what they read in the literature of the free-thinkers. The result was that the writer's mind became unstable and shifted like a weather cock. But Allah had given him a good habit at nights while all were asleep around him, he used to sit up in his bed and earnestly pray to Allah to guide him to the right religion. This he used to do every night without fail and also many a time in solitude during the day too. Then it occurred to him to study the Holy Qoran and see what it says. The writer applied himself to the task and began to study it together with its Urdu translation and commentary. Whenever he had any doubt or perplexity he used to open the sacred volume and pronouncing the sacred formula (Bismillah) to look into it and lo! there appeared a verse which cleared up his doubt and removed the perplexity in a moment. It would appear as if the verse had been revealed expressly for the writer's

The writer's
scepticism for a
time and how
Allah rescued
him from it

edification This is one of the greatest miracles of the Holy Qoran Allah has appropriately called it a guide and a mercy to the believers A seeker after truth consulting its pages will find it an infallible guide indeed Every question is answered and every objection met therein Allah caused also some books of the famous divine Al-Gazali to come to the hands of the writer This eminent author, who is said to have written some six hundred books on religion and philosophy and explained Islam so rationally and convincingly demonstrated the truth of Islamic beliefs and teachings that the surname 'Hujjat-ul Islam' or the "Argument of Islam" has been conferred upon him by the Islamic world He is also held in high esteem in Europe and his Philosophy is taught in the higher classes of Colleges in Germany and other European countries The writer recommends to every Muslim student to study some of his (Al-gazali's) books Any book written by this erudite writer is equally profitable to the reader but the following three books are particularly recommended to beginners and sincere seekers after truth

- (1) His autobiography named "Munkhiz-minaz-zalal" or the Rescue from Ignorance
- (2) "Keemiya-i-Saadat" or "Alchemy of Bliss," and
- (3) "Ehya-ul-uloom" or "Revival of Knowledge"

During the course of his religious studies the writer felt as if the Merciful Allah held this blind and unworthy creature by the hand and led him step by step just as an affectionate parent would teach his young child how to walk The result was that Allah out of His Infinite Compassion made a Muslim of the perplexed youth May Allah's name be glorified for ever and ever! No doubt His Mercy extends to the meanest of His Creatures and He is ever ready to succour those who call on Him The writer personally experienced the truth of the Divine promise "But those who fight strenuously for us (or try hard to understand and approach us) We will surely guide

them into our way, for verily God is with those who do well" The Holy Qoran 29 70

Before continuing the narrative it is necessary that the meaning of the oft-repeated Muslim formula "Bismillah-hir-Rahmannir Rahim" be explained to the readers. It is a saying of Hazrat Ali that the Holy Qoran contains the essence of all the previous heavenly books that the Fateha or the Opening Chapter of the Holy Qoran contains the essence of the whole Qoran and that the formula placed at the top of the first chapter, as also at that of all succeeding chapters excepting one, is an epitome of the whole chapter. From this its great importance can be guessed. Translated into English it means "(I commence this work) with the name of Allah the Merciful and the Compassionate". Allah has Himself set an example to Muslims by placing it at the beginning of every chapter of the Holy Qoran. The Holy Prophet has repeatedly impressed upon his followers that Satan participates in every action which is not commenced with this formula. He has ordered us Muslims to begin every lawful act, such as eating drinking going to bed getting out of it reading writing issuing from the house or entering into it, in short before doing any act to pronounce this sacred formula. As soon as it is pronounced, Satan abandons the hope of interfering with or marring the effect of the act, over which it is pronounced and makes himself scarce. On the other hand Mercy of Allah is showered down upon the actor and guardian angels protect and help him. Such is the combined effect of the three greatest names of Allah contained in the formula. Nor is this a matter for wonder. The writer has on several occasions passed Government Examinations with great credit simply by virtue of it, though he had not prepared himself sufficiently by study. It not only leads to success in the work undertaken but also serves to remind one of his Creator's Presence. The following story is worth remembering in this connection.

The meaning and use of the Muslim formula Bismillah

There used to live a certain holy old Muslim, whose piety and sanctity were world-famed. A wag and a holy old man people used to resort to him for advice and blessing when in difficulties. Whenever a sick person went up to him, he used to pronounce certain names of Allah or certain verses from the Holy Qoran and blow over the affected part with his mouth and the pain or the fever would instantly vanish. Close to him lived a confirmed sceptic who had no belief in charms or incantations. He wanted to amuse himself and some of his friends one day, at the expense of the holy man. So he went up with his friends to him and making a mock reverence asked him how he could pretend to cure patients without any medicine and by merely uttering certain words. He accosted him with much ironical respect and questioned him why he had been gulling credulous fools by his gibberish. The holy man on hearing the question said "You donkey, have you no brains in your head that you come and ask me such a stupid question"? On hearing this insulting language, the sceptic flew into rage, he shook with passion, his eyes grew red and he made various nervous movements with his hands as if to attack the old man and handle him roughly. When the old man saw him in that condition, he told him "Friend be not so angry with me. I had no mind to insult you. You came here quite cool and collected and asked me a question. In reply I used the name of 'donkey'. I gave you no medicine nor did I touch you. The mere mention of the word donkey has put you beside yourself. If the name of that poor stupid animal has wrought such an effect upon you, what effect the name of Allah cannot produce upon sick people"? The wag went away crestfallen. All Muslim readers are requested to adopt the habit of commencing any work they do with the precious formula

The writer passes an examination in Criminal Law. There were two grades of it, the Higher and the Lower. He had but recently left College and knew nothing whatever of Law. Being

The writer passes an examination when seventy-one others fail.

employed at that time as a clerk in the Collector's office and having very little leisure at his disposal, he was writing an application to appear for the Lower Grade hoping to study the subject within the three months' time that intervened the application and the Examination.

A Hindu friend a fellow clerk tauntingly exclaimed

What you appear only for the Lower Grade it is a shame, go up for the Higher Grade. Piqued at his

words (being a young man of twenty years) and putting his trust in Allah, the writer went up for the Higher Grade.

The Examination was stiff. Three books had to be studied. Only one the most difficult of them, the Indian

Evidence Act he read twice and that without commentary the second book the Indian Penal Code he read only

once, at intervals of time as if he were reading a novel and the third book he did not read at all.

There were seventy-two candidates in all more than forty being graduates. The papers were very difficult and many left

the hall without attempting to answer them as they could not understand the questions. Many of the candidates

were officials some of them actually exercising Magisterial powers and some pleaders. All the prominent

newspapers complained that the questions were very difficult and suggested that a re-examination be held by

the Government as the failures were unprecedented. The writer was also at first unable to fully understand the

questions but taking up his pen and pronouncing the sacred formula began to answer them. It was all conjectural work purely but such was the potency of the

formula that the writer alone came out successful out of the seventy-two. That seventy-one candidates should

fail out of seventy-two is rather unusual and proves the severity of the examination.

Official promotion of the writer was made conditional

by the Collector, the head of the office on

his passing the Translation Test in Telugu and the writer was very anxious, as he had

not studied that language either at school or in private. He however appeared for

The writer passes
the Telugu Test as
first in the Presi-
dency without study

W

the Test and using his tried formula answered the papers. He prayed to Allah fervently that he might pass the test though his name should appear at the bottom of the list of successful candidates. Such was the Mercy of Allah and the power of His Sacred Names that the writer's name appeared at the very top of the list. A Muslim lad beating some hundred and twenty Hindu candidates in their mother tongue so pleased the Collector that he gave him double promotion at once. He thought that the writer must have studied very hard to excel the Brahmin candidates in their own vernacular and came out first in the Presidency. The truth is that he never studied it for even a day, he only picked up the language during his intercourse with them.

The Government of Madras prescribed a test in the Account Code and made it incumbent on all those who had completed the Deputy Collector's Test, to pass this additional test. About one hundred candidates sat for the test, the writer one amongst them. He had never studied accounts nor even purchased a copy of the prescribed text-book. Five of his fellow-clerks whose seats were around the writer's seat in the office, used to read the book whole night at home and used to discuss it in the office during the day. The writer used simply to listen to their discussions. He though quite unprepared for the examination sat up with the others and the result showed that only six had passed it out of the hundred. Of the six successful candidates the writer was one and the other five were the identical five whose seats surrounded the writer's and the beauty of the thing was that the names of all the six were bracketed together as having secured the same number of marks. How powerful was the sacred Formula!

The incident now to be related occurred during a journey. In the old days when there was no Railway running between Calcutta and Madras, the writer had to go from his district Godavari to the South Arcot

Passes another
examination simi-
larly

Miraculous reco-
very of writer's
stolen articles.

District He travelled to Madras on board a steamer. At Madras he went to the Egmore Railway Station and purchased a third class ticket to Tindivanam on the S I Railway. He was all alone and a canvas hand bag and a copper 'lota' was all he carried. He kept his ticket in his money-purse and kept the purse in the canvas bag. He took his seat in a carriage on the side nearest the platform keeping his two articles under the seat. There were some other passengers and the compartment was full. There was a latrine quite opposite the carriage. As the platform clock showed there was yet eight minutes' time to start, the writer went into the latrine leaving the door of the carriage ajar. There was in those days no privy accommodation in third class carriages. He came out in three minutes from the latrine but what was his consternation to find that both his bag and the 'lota' had disappeared! The train had not moved and the door was still open as he had left it. All the fellow-passengers were seated as before and when asked about the missing things said they knew nothing about them. The reader can imagine the writer's plight. All the money was in the missing purse and what was worse the Railway ticket was also gone. He could not travel by the train and he knew nobody at Madras to go or borrow money from. His first idea was to inform the Police or the Station Master but he soon discarded the idea. For neither of them could produce the things on the spur of the moment they would only detain him for enquiry. The train would stop on no account and the writer was travelling express to meet a dying dear relation. Two more minutes passed away and there remained only three minutes for the train to start. When the writer felt his utter helplessness and also saw that no human being could help him, he involuntarily sent up a silent, earnest mental prayer to Him who alone could succour him. Scarcely had he done this, when a message flashed in his mind "Go and look for thy things in the fourth carriage from here and they will be found there." Without hesitating a second, he at once ran up to the fourth carriage and opening its door rushed in and sure enough there were

the two articles kept in a corner. He at once pounced upon his things and carried them back to his own carriage and scarcely had he sat down and closed the door when the train started. The carriage in which the things were found was not a third class carriage. In those days some two or three covered wagons used to be attached to every passenger train. It was known as the cooly class. The fare was perhaps a trifle lower and very poor people used to travel in that. The difference consisted in there being no benches to sit upon and the cooly passengers had to squat on the floor. Some one of the inmates of that particular carriage was probably lounging on the platform and seizing his opportunity quietly conveyed the things into his own carriage. After the train had once started on its journey recovery of the things would have become utterly impossible. O Merciful and compassionate Allah glory be to Thy Name! How Merciful and Compassionate art Thou even to Thy meanest creature! How prompt is Thy Succour to Thy Suppliants! Truly has Thou said. And when My Servants ask thee concerning Me, then surely I am very near, I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he calls on Me. " The Holy Quran 2 : 186

O Most Forgiving and Most Compassionate Lord, Thou that hast freely bestowed Thy mercies all along upon this the meanest and the most sinful of Thy slaves, neither forget nor forsake him in his old age. Thou hast out of Thy unbounded Grace commanded Thy servants the Muslims not to despair, for however great their sins. Thy Mercy is far greater, nay Infinite. Purge this old sinner of all sin and uncleanness, grant him a true Muslim's death and raise him up on the Last Day under the banner of Thy Chosen Prophet Hazarath Muhammad (Thy peace and blessings on him for ever!) Amen

When the writer was about twenty-five years old, a disease attacked him. Numerous white leucodermic spots covered both his palms up to the wrists. Though this disease is

Miraculous recovery
from Leucoderma

neither fatal nor painful, yet it is a nasty shameful disease Great was his sorrow on finding himself attacked by this malady, as he knew it to be incurable by medicine He searched for a remedy for it in the sayings of the Holy Prophet and discovered a formula which he has taught to his followers He has said that a Muslim repeating it thrice after his morning prayer every day for some time would be cured of leprosy, leucoderma and similar incurable diseases The writer began to do so and within a few months, all the spots disappeared and his hands became clean and spotless as before May Allah shower down His Mercies and Blessings upon His Chosen Prophet and his descendants for all the good he has done to mankind and specially to his followers !

Was this an ordinary incident ? Every one knows how incurable the disease is That it should be cured by merely repeating a few words, was it not a miracle of the Holy Prophet's and an exhibition of Allah's mercy ? The writer will be happy to communicate the formula to those who may wish to learn it

The occurrence now about to be related surpasses all the others mentioned here, in wonder It is without the shadow of doubt a great miracle of the Holy Qoran The writer served for some years in the Cuddapah District He had to hire a small house to live in, in a village which was his official head quarters His family being rather numerous and the accommodation inadequate he had to put up six more rooms in the house, all of them thatched with long hill-grass used for that purpose in that country One of these rooms was constructed on top of the house which was a terrace This was the largest and used as a bed room The other rooms were small in the construction of which the compound wall was utilized that is two sheds were put up in a sloping fashion from over the compound wall on both sides and the sheds divided into three rooms on one side and two on the other the intervening space not being more than six feet wide,

The writer's house
miraculously saved
from fire

was left as a passage for walking. The whole house was thatched and in addition a tati or screen was put up for gosha or privacy on three sides of the terrace fronting the bed-room. This tati was also made up of thin bamboo matting and grass. It must also be explained that there were three other houses on one side and three more on the other, belonging to different people and all situated in a row, along one side of the street. The house adjoining the writer's house on the southern side was a stone terrace but it had a thatched verandah about twenty four feet long and eight or nine feet broad, running along the terrace. The grass thatching of this verandah and that of the two rooms put up by the writer, both rested on top of an earthen wall on one side. This top was not more than a foot wide. On the northern side of the house abutted a stone terrace and in the house beyond that stood a large tamarind tree. One afternoon at about 2 O'clock in midsummer the third house on the southern side which was a thatched hut caught fire, a strong hot wind blowing fiercely from the southern side at the time. The writer at once went up his own terrace and saw that in a few minutes the verandah in the adjoining house would catch fire and then unavoidably the fire would extend to his own house and as the whole house was thatched, it would be consumed in a few more minutes. The house appeared to be irremediably doomed, nor was there any means of saving it. The hot wind was scorching and no one could come out of his house for fear of sun stroke. Further no men stayed in the village at that hour. On account of the intense heat in summer, the people go away at dawn to work in their fields and gardens, carrying their midday meals with them and return home at about sunset, when the heat abates. But supposing there had been a thousand men available to render assistance, they could not have saved the house. Water was not available and there was no time to remove the furniture in the house. The writer was convinced that the house was doomed. He made no attempt to save it for he knew it was impossible. He only shifted his wife and children to a safe place and bidding them

not despair went back up the terrace and stood there, some time ago a learned and pious old Muslim had pointed out a verse of the Holy Qoran and had said that if any catastrophe or danger should appear about to occur, when no human assistance could avail, that verse might be repeated and the danger would pass over. This circumstance came to the writer's mind and he stood rooted to the spot repeating the verse without stopping. Sparks of fire were flying about and were burning holes in the clothing and in the umbrella held over his head, by a servant but the writer moved not. Meantime the hut which had at first caught fire, was completely burnt down, the palm leaves in its thatching flying about high in the air like so many burning kites and the verandah of the adjoining house caught fire but in a strange way. It did not begin to burn in one corner or one place. As if petroleum had been sprinkled over it and ignited one vast sheet of flame some thirty feet long and a dozen feet broad, abruptly shot up and passing over the grass thatched roof of the two rooms touching the burning verandah and over the thatched bed room which was just right in its way, without causing any damage the sheet of flame went and fell over the tamarind tree in the third house in the row and so fierce was the fire that live green tree began to burn and continued burning for sometime afterwards. Not a spark fell over any of the six thatched roofs which stretched within a few feet of the flames. But the most wonderful part remains yet to be told. In thatching with straw or the hill-grass which is about a yard in length, it is tied up into small handy sheaves and they are placed side by side over the slanting roof in a row then another layer of sheaves is laid over it leaving about a span's length at the thick end the next layer of sheaves is spread about a span higher up and so on until the top is reached. For some length the sheaves of the writer's rooms and those of the verandah of the adjoining house rested upon the same wall, facing one another at the thick ends, here being not more than an inch or two of space between them. When the sheet of flame abruptly rose up it consumed all the sheaves of the verandah and did

not touch a speck of the sheaves of the writer's rooms so close to them and quite opposite, as if a straight line were drawn between the two rows of sheaves and the fire had orders not to harm the writer's property! There is not the slightest exaggeration in this description, on the other hand the writer's want of sufficient command over the English language makes it look rather tame. It was a sight to be seen and so people came from far-off places by railway trains and look in at it wondered whether it was a miracle or magic that saved the house. A miracle of the highest order of the Holy Koran it was indeed, the like of which had never been seen. Thou art indeed, O Allah! absolute Master and Lord of the Universe. After seeing this, who can doubt that Abraham (peace on him!) came out of the fire quite unscathed?

Once the writer was travelling from Madras by train with his family. He reserved a third class compartment and occupied it. It was a night journey and the weather was very hot and sultry. The writer's wife as is the custom of Indian women had some gold and silver ornaments on her persons. As the train entered a hilly country the heat became unbearable owing to the dried grass and scrub on the hills catching fire and burning with intense heat. She removed the jewellery from her person as it had grown hot and kept it in a band-box she had at hand. This band-box was very old and worm-eaten. Its lock had gone and it had no latch to secure it fast. It was in fact fit only to be brown away but she used it to keep in her sewing thread, needles, scissors and cuttings of cloth. She kept several articles of her jewellery over the cuttings with which the band-box was more than half-full, meaning to wear them again shortly after when it should grow a little cool and shoved the bound under the seat. She soon however fell asleep and forgot all about it. The family de-trained at 2 o'clock in the night and reaching home all slept soundly. As soon as the compartment had been vacated the Gaurd removed the "Reserved" ticket and let in several passengers. The band-box was forgotten, and

Miraculous restoration of the writer's property left in Railway train

its loss found out only the next morning at seven. As the jewellery was worth about five hundred rupees, the loss was rather serious. The writer went back to the station and advised the station master of the loss of the box, though the fact of the jewellery being kept therein was not revealed. He said that the train must have passed some eight or ten stations and that it would be almost impossible to recover the band-box at that late hour. He however sent wires to several stations and the writer waited for about twenty or thirty minutes but no reply being received went back home. On the way back he thus communed with himself. "The Holy Prophet has said that whoever recites certain verses (specified in Hadith) of the Holy Qoran, while starting on a journey, his life and property are safe till he returns home and I duly recited the verses why then should my property be lost in this manner? I cannot believe it lost, it must and will come back to me." Well, the writer went home and duly attended office and busied himself with his official work. What was his surprise when in the evening at 6 o'clock as he was returning home a railway porter brought the band box and handed it over to him saying that it had come by the 5 o'clock train from the Terminus Station. As he was carrying it the top of it was shaking and the solid silver ornaments inside were making a rhythmic noise by striking against the sides by the motion of the carrier's walk. The writer lifted up the lid and found all the jewellery intact, lying over the rags just as it had been left! Consider the circumstances. The box was left in the train at 2 o'clock in the night and the train reached the Terminus Station at about 10 a.m. Scores of passengers if not hundreds, must have travelled in the compartment. None of them carried it off. After the receipt of the telegram a search must have been made for it and when found it was kept in the station till 2 p.m. from that time till 5 p.m. it was in charge of Guard of the train. Then it was handed over to the station master, who gave it to the porter who brought it to the writer's house, about a mile from the station. A dozen men must have handled it and the lid, which was dome like and made of the lightest wood, lighter

perhaps than card-board, was shaking, the lock had gone and the hasp was dangling loosely and there was no other fastening, not one of the men who handled it lifted up the loose lid and saw what it contained or the jewellery would certainly have been abstracted. Thus was the saying of the Holy Prophet verified.

The writer was once travelling in a boat with his family. It had to cross the river Krishna above the anicut. That year the river was in high flood, it was said the floods were unprecedented. A huge mass of water several feet high, was falling in a cataract from over the anicut on the stone-revetted pavement below, making a great and fearful din. The boat ought to have been towed along the southern bank several miles up the river and then the sail hoisted and the boat would cross the river in safety to the northern bank. It subsequently appeared that the Sarang or the man in charge of the boat was addicted to the bad habit of smoking ganja. In a state of intoxication he misjudged the distance and letting the boat drift on the river hoisted the sails too soon. The boat instead of running across the river was caught in the rush of the mid-current and impelled by a strong westerly wind rushed swiftly towards the waterfall. The writer was inside the cabin reading a book and knew nothing of the impending danger. There were some twenty or more passengers on the boat and when the boat rushed dangerously near the water-fall, yells and screams of distress arose from them. The writer came out of the cabin and saw that indeed the case was almost hopeless. The boat was unmanageable in the strong wind and was rushing like a dry stray leaf towards its doom. A crowd of people had assembled on the opposite bank and were crying aloud that the boat was being wrecked and drowned. The fatal spot was not more than fifty yards and at the rate the boat was rushing it was only a matter of two or three minutes for the catastrophe to occur. The writer was convinced that the boat would be swept over the cataract and would be dashed to pieces and all on board would perish in a

The writer with his family miraculously saved from a watery grave

watery grave Being unwilling to witness the sad end, he betook himself into his cabin and there prostrated himself before Allah the Mighty and the Merciful and began to call on Him and to offer a fervent prayer silently Most wonderful to relate, scarcely a minute had passed, when the westerly wind abruptly ceased and after a second's dead calm, a strong gust of wind arose from the opposite direction and swept the boat up the river some five miles within as many minutes and left it safe The crowd that had assembled on the bank to witness the wreck, were balked of their anticipated spectacle but the lives of all on board were saved O Almighty Allah! Thy power indeed is unbounded and Thy Creatures cannot think Thee enough for all the care Thou bestows upon them

The writer was once engaged in Friday prayer in a Mosque with several others at about 1 o'clock in the day The season was midsummer and a strong hot scorching wind was blowing from the west While the prayer was about half done, an old woman ran up to the mosque crying out that the Muslim huts had caught fire The huts were situated at about a furlong's distance from the mosque They were all thatched huts, most of them round in shape with a conical peaked roof and all clustered together with hardly any intervening space If one of them caught fire, the whole cluster of houses would be destroyed, and with the strong wind blowing against them, it would be a matter of a few minutes Consternation seized the poor men and soon after the Namaz was over, they all ran pell-mell towards their houses making wild cries of distress The writer also accompanied them He remembered having read a saying of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings on him!) to the effect that when fire breaks out Takbir should be cried by all those present and the fire would go out That saying came to his mind and he advised the men to walk in an orderly manner crying aloud the Takbu (or Allah-o-Akbar) instead of making wild cries They all at once obeyed and walked in order crying aloud the Takbir as directed On preaching

How the cry of
Takbir extinguish-
ed flames from
a burning thatched
hut

the place, it was found that a hut in the very center of the houses, with a peaked roof, had caught fire, no one knew how, in the middle of the sloping roof and having burnt a round hole about three or four feet in diameter had died of itself! No attempt had been made to put out the fire, as all the men had gone to the mosque and the spot where the fire broke out in the roof was too high up for the women to reach. The roof was thatched with a straw which was as dry as tinder. A strong wind was blowing over the house. It cannot be humanly explained how the fire went out of itself after making a big hole in the centre of a slanting roof thatched with straw. There cannot be the slightest doubt that the fire went out by virtue of the Holy Name of Allah pronounced by so many of His poor creatures. Was not this a miracle? Nothing more wonderful than this could be imagined. This was another verification of the saying of the Holy Prophet

Many a time was he writer's life saved by the Merciful Allah, as if by a miracle. While he was a young boy below ten years of age, he was attacked by what is commonly called chicken pox. In addition he had several boils of itch all over his head and body. The weather

How the writer
was awakened from
sleep by an un-
known agency

being intensely hot he had a *piyal* in the house, which had been newly plastered with mortar, washed and slept upon it for its coolness without any bedding. He fell into a profound sleep. The time was about 2 p.m. When he had slept for some time, some one appeared to him in a dream and shaking him repeatedly—he was in his boyhood a very profound sleeper—bade him get up at once as a snake of a deadly kind was crawling slowly towards his head. The mouth of the snake was within a span's distance from the pillow. If the writer had not been thus providentially awakened within a minute or two he would certainly have been bitten, as the snake was advancing right towards his head. Of course the snake was killed. Who was it that so timely awoke the writer? He must have been his guardian angel, as Allah says he has set guardian angels over all men to watch over them. Let those who believe not in angels explain the phenomenon if they can.

The writer was in his youth very fond of shooting game. He had always with him a double-barrelled gun and cartridges when out in camp. One day as he was travelling in a bullock cart, the peon who accompanied him told him there was game in a tank by the road-side. The writer at once got down and taking up his gun went up to the tank bund. The time was nearly six in the evening but there was much light still left. The tank was a small one and was dried up only some wet mud was at the bottom and three large birds of game, wild geese, or swans were picking up worms in it and were walking about in the search of them. The writer loaded the gun and going behind the trunk of a tree sat upon his feet and pulling up trigger capped the gun and to aim. He was only waiting to fire if the three birds should come into line or at least two of them, but they would not. As he was waiting to fire, he felt something rubbing against his foot which had only a half-slipper on. At first he did not mind it but when the rubbing continued for some time against the bare skin as if a coir rope were being rubbed against it, he turned round and saw a long black cobra of the deadliest kind dragging itself along out of a hole, and in doing so rubbing against his foot. The writer had in sitting there to take aim half closed by his foot the hole of the snake which he had not noticed. The snake wanted to come out of its hole but finding it half closed by the foot, was straining and squeezing its body and painfully issuing out of the hole. It was the scales under his belly that rubbed against the writer's foot! About four feet of his body had come out of the hole and there must have been as much more in it. The All-Merciful Allah had prevented it from biting the foot, when it obstructed the passage the snake must have known it was a human foot. And supposing the gun had been fired the snake startled at the sudden explosion would certainly have coiled itself around the foot and bitten it in several places. But such is the Absolute Sovereignty of Allah, that without His permission no harm can befall His Creatures, even though in contact with deadly peril.

A miraculous escape from a cobra bite

On another occasion, the writer camped in a village in his official tour. In a certain house at the end of the village a portion was placed at his disposal. It consisted of a hall and a very small room. The room was so small that when a cot was placed in it and a carpet spread by its side it was just filled up. The hall was utilized to accommodate the office and the room as bed-room. In the evening when all the clerks and peons had gone to take their meals, and the hall was empty the writer was lying on his cot engaged in reading a book in the candle light, the cook brought the meals and spreading a cloth on the carpet arranged the plates and cups, together with bread, curry, milk and sugar. He advised the writer that the meals were served. But as he was reading an interesting book and it was about to be concluded, he bade the cook wait outside a while and went on reading. A few minutes later he heard the clatter of china and thinking rats must be running about raised his head and looked down, when lo! a thick long black cobra not less than eight feet long had laid himself on the cloth amidst the cups and the plates and with his hood extended and his long double-tongue playing in and out looked up and stared at him with his beady eyes! This uninvited guest was probably regaling himself with the viands and frolicking over the cloth. What was to be done? There was no stick and not room enough to wield it in even if there had been one. It is true that the snake did not molest the writer. But when and how was this unbidden guest to depart and his in welcome visit to end? His dangerous proximity was anything but pleasant. If the writer raised a clamour or attempted to drive him out by clapping his hands or shoo-shooing, he the sovake might strike at him the writer for disturbing him in his feast and he was a very prodigious fellow, fearful to look upon. But Allah gave the writer the necessary presence of mind. When the snake stared at him for a minute or two, he quietly laid himself on bed again as if he had not noticed him and waited until the clatter of china was again heard. Being assured that the snake was engaged with the viands and his frolics once more, the writer slowly dragged himself to

one end of the bed then suddenly raised himself and taking a leap over the snake and placing one foot on lintel of the door, jumped free out of the room. The snake was between the cot and the only door the room had. When the writer came out, the cook, who had been sitting outside, thinking that the writer had done taking his meals went towards the room to remove the vessels and seeing a big cobra playing there, raised a cry snake ! snake ! when a number of men assembled but the snake made himself scarce.

The writer once went out for shooting. He had a double-barrelled gun with him. On seeing half-a-dozen ducks swimming in the centre of a tank, he loaded both barrels and waded some distance into the water, to take a nearer shot, as the distance was too great. While wading in that deep water, holding his trousers up with his left hand to avoid wetting and the capped gun with triggers up in the right hand something wire-like entangled his legs. It might have been a water-snake or a creeper which grows under water. Whilst the writer struggled to free his legs the gun turned round as if on a swivel and both the shots went off at once passing between his left side and his left hand which was akimbo. That was a close shave.

When the writer was a young boy, several school-boys went out for shooting on a holiday. There were two guns with the party. One a double-barrelled gun was in charge of a grown up lad who was a good marksman and the writer was carrying the knap-sack containing powder and other ammunition and supplying to him whatever he wanted out of it. On observing a large flight of water-fowl the double-barrelled gun was loaded with a plentiful-supply of big shot. The lad in charge of the gun then sat upon his feet resting the gun on a maund with the barrels upwards and wanted two caps for the gun. The writer taking them out of his wallet handed them over to him and being a young fellow unaware of danger stood beside him holding the barrel with

his left hand and bending down his head to watch the process of capping. The barrel touched his cheek and the open ends of both the barrels were within an inch of his face. The lad capped one barrel and leaving the trigger drawn up, capped the other barrel also, but in slowly bringing down the second trigger, his hand perhaps trembled and both the triggers came down with force and the shots went off. The writer was stunned and dazed but Allah saved his life narrowly, as a single shot entering his temple would have made an end of him.

The incident now to be related though it does not concern the writer personally, was one nevertheless witnessed by him and is well worth publishing. When he was a young schoolboy a famine occurred in his district. For three years not a drop of water had fallen from the clouds and there being no railway communication in those days, great was the scarcity of grain and fodder and pasture. Men and cattle suffered alike and died by thousands. A rich and kind-hearted Zemindar consulted his Brahmin priests what should be done to bring on rain. They said that some religious ceremony or sacrifice should be performed, the sacred Shastras should be repeated for forty days, feeding a large number of Brahmins and giving alms to them all the while. The kind Zemindar had it all done at a cost of some thousands but no rain fell. When questioned the priests replied that some irregularities had crept into the performance and that if it should be done a second time with proper care and due observance of all the rites, rain would assuredly fall. It was all gone through over again at a cost of some more thousands but still no rain fell. Then the Zemindar sent word to the Muslim inhabitants that if there was any ceremony or ritual to be performed according to their religion, he would defray the expenses of it. The Khazi sent back a message to him that Islam enjoined no ceremonies for bringing rain, beyond praying for it to Allah in a mass, and that no money was needed for it and as in a week's time all Muslims would gather out of town for the I'd prayer, this prayer for the rain also

Immediate down
pour of rain in
response to Muslims
prayers

would be said at the same time All Muslims were told to attend the I'd prayer without fail So all gathered in the plain, adults and children and all The gathering was not less than ten thousand The Ead prayer was offered as usual and it was past eleven a m by the time Then the Khazi explained to the people the particular way in which the prayer for rain called Salat-e-Istiskha should be offered, as taught by the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings on him) Many people had brought their domestic animals also, cattle, sheep, goats and ponies These were all made to stand apart The prayer began , many bared their heads, many others wept All prostrated before their Creator Even the animals lifted up their heads to the sky as if imploring Allah's mercy and sincere and fervent were the prayers offered by men The writer well remembers the scene it is engraved upon his memory The sun was fiercely hot men were bathed in sweat The prayer continued for about half-an-hour and many eyes were raised towards the sky, when a small bit of black cloud, in shape exactly like the trunk of an elephant rose from the west and spread itself over the entire horizon Big drops of rain began to fall raising a cloud of dust from the parched earth Then such torrents of rain fell over the land that within a few minutes the roads became impassable for there was more than three feet of water over them All who had gone to the prayer were drenched and so was the writer, who had proudly put on a new coloured dress for the occasion The colour dyed him in all the colours of the rainbow by the rain O Merciful Allah! unbounded is Thy love for thy Creatures and an appeal to Thy mercy is never made in vain !

How many more instance of Allah's protection and mercy can the writer enumerate ! To those that believe in Allah those mentioned above are more than enough The writer once more gives his assurance that in narrating all the incidents, he has strictly adhered to the truth and that no motives of ostentation have prompted him in publishing them Rather his object has been to induce readers of whatever religion they may be to have

more faith and love towards Allah, their Creator and appeal to Him alone in all their difficulties. As for Muslim readers, they are earnestly requested to read this life of the Holy Prophete not once or twice but as often as they can and try to obey his orders and imitate his example in all their affairs. Having such a wise and kind teacher, it would be their misfortune if they fail to profit by his instruction.

Whilst acknowledging Allah's above-mentioned, No such thing as chance in nature mercies and others too numerous to count shown to him, with profound and sincere gratitude the writer is not vain enough to think that they were confined to his unworthy self. On the contrary it is his firm belief and conviction that the Merciful Allah watches over all His creatures without exception and helps and protects them in all difficulties and dangers. The difference lies not in His uniform help but in the different views which people take of the same happenings. For instance many people would attribute many of the incidents detailed above to chance. There is no more misleading word than this. All human experience proves that there can be no effect produced without a cause but those who believe in chance would have us believe that effects can be produced without causes. Let us remember that there is no such thing as chance in nature. The world would be a sorry world indeed if things were left to chance to happen. Every thing would go topsy turvy. Nothing can happen in the world but with the knowledge and power of Allah. When anything favourable to us happens, therefore we should render our humble thanks to him, instead of to chance, which is a meaningless word, or our good stars and the like which are as powerless as ourselves.

The reader who has gone through this book without bias will have ascertained by this time that the great Prophet of Arabia has conclusively proved by his teachings and personal example that he belonged to the highest class of world teachers and that no other teacher

did so much for the uplift of humanity as he and therefore he fully deserves the title of the Prince of Prophets. It is a deplorable fact that the early Christians maligned him to their hearts' content. They invented all sorts of lying tales about him, They imputed glaringly false teachings and absurd doctrines to him, so as to mislead people and prevent them from studying his religion, by bringing it into ridicule, and creating a disgust against it.

The Christian monks and priests were the chief offenders and the Bible being a sealed book to the laity and literacy rare amongst them, they implicitly believed to be true whatever nonsense the priests told them.

The cause for this animosity as explained by the writer elsewhere lay in the fact that Islam discarded the whole hierarchy of priests from the village pastor to the supreme Pope as superfluous. If Islam were to oust Christianity the whole hordes of priests would have to starve or work for their livelihood in common with other men and no longer pray upon the credulous laity and rob them of their hard earnings. The danger was very great and they did all in their power to vilify Islam. The vilification went up to that length that the later Christian writers were themselves disgusted with it.

One of them writes "I shall abstain from copying the disgusting trash which has been written respecting the character and conduct of Mohammad by the Christian priests—some of them (Prideaux for instance) men of great learning and high respectability—men who indeed, ought to have been above such conduct, but whose zeal in this case has actually destroyed their sense of right and wrong, and as it should seem, taken away from them the use of their understandings. If I were to detail the vulgar abuse in which they have indulged no information respecting the character of Muhammad would thereby be conveyed to any liberal or reflecting mind and the Christian religion would be wounded by the infamous behaviour of its professors."

(Godfrey Higgins in his Apology)

Though the enemies of Islam succeeded to a great extent in their nefarious attempts to deprecate it, yet they could not entirely obscure truth with their falsehood. It has been aptly remarked that though rogues may dupe many people for a time or a few people for all time, yet no rogue can dupe all people for all time. Men with better discernment and less prejudice arose and began to study and write about Islam. Several whose mental eyes were opened by Allah openly admitted its truth and publicly entered into its fold. Many others are Muslims at heart, they cannot openly avow it for various reasons. The writer will give in this chapter the opinions of several men who are all avowed Christians and as such non-believers in Islam but whose convictions forced them to write what they thought and felt about Islam.

“Our current hypothesis about Muhammad that he was a scheming impostor, a Falsehood incarnate, that his religion is a mere mass of quackery and fatuity, begins now to be un-tenable to any one. The LIES, which well-meaning zeal has heaped round this man are disgraceful to ourselves only. When Pococke enquired of Grotius where the proof was of that story of the pigeon trained to pick peas from Muhammad’s ear and pass for an angel dictating to him, Grotius answered there was no proof. It is really time to dismiss all that Word this man spoke has been the life-guidance now of a hundred-and-eighty millions, (now two hundred-and-fifty millions) of men these twelve hundred years. These hundred-and eighty millions were made by God as well as we. A great number of God’s creatures believe in Muhammad’s word at this hour than in any other word whatever. Are we to suppose that it was a miserable piece of spiritual legerdemain, this which so many creatures of the Almighty have lived by and died by? I, for my part, cannot form any such supposition. I will believe most things sooner than that. A false man found a religion? Why, a false man cannot build a brick-house! If he does

Thomas Carlyle’s
Opinion

not know and follow truly the properties of mortar, burnt clay and what else he works in, it is no house that he makes, but a rubbish-heap. It will not stand for twelve centuries to lodge a hundred-and-eighty millions, it will fall straightway. But of a Great Man especially of him I will venture to assert that it is incredible he should have been other than true. The man's words were not false, nor his workings here below no Inanity and simulacrum, a fiery mass of Life cast up from the great bosom of Nature, the worlds' maker had ordered it so."

THOMAS CARLYLL IN HEROES AND HERO-WORSHIP

"He was an enthusiast in that noblest sense when Lane Pools opinion enthusiasm becomes the salt of the earth, the one thing that keeps men from rotting whilst they live. Enthusiasm is often used spitefully, because it is joined to an unworthy cause, or falls upon barren ground and bears no fruit. So was it not with Muhammad. He was an enthusiast when enthusiasm was the one thing needed to set the world aflame, and his enthusiasm was noble for a noble cause. He was the messenger of the one God and never to his life's end did he forget who he was or the message which was the marrow of his being. He brought his tidings to his people with a grand dignity sprung from the consciousness of his high office, together with a most sweet humility, whose roots lay in the knowledge of his own weakness."

LANE-POOL IN SPEECHES AND TALKS OF MUHAMMAD

"Let us endeavour to perceive what adequate object Washington Irving's opinion he could have to gain by the impious and stupendous imposture with which he stands charged. Was it riches? His marriage with Khadijah had already made him wealthy. Was it distinction? He already stood high in his native place as a man of intelligence and probity. He was of the illustrious tribe of the Qoreish, and of the most honoured branch of that tribe. Was it power? The guardianship of the Ka'aba and with

it the command of the sacred city had been for generations in his immediate family and his situation and circumstances entitled him to look forward with confidence to that exalted trust. In attempting to subvert the faith in which he had been brought up, he struck at the very root of all these advantages. On that faith were founded the fortunes and dignities of his family. Was there anything brilliant in the outset of his prophetic career to repay him for these sacrifices, and to lure him on? On the contrary it was begun in doubt and secrecy. For years together it was not attended by any material success. In proportion as he made known his doctrines and proclaimed his revelations, they subjected him to ridicule, scorn, obloquy and finally to an inveterate persecution which ruined the fortunes of himself and his friends, compelled some of his family and followers to take refuge in foreign land, obliged him to hide from sight in his native city, and drove him forth a fugitive to seek an uncertain home elsewhere. Why should he persist for years in a course of imposture which was thus prostrating all his worldly fortunes at a time of life when it was too late to build them up anew?"

WASHINGTON IRVING IN THE LIFE OF MUHAMMAD

The Answer is simple. Because he was a true prophet of God, he was bound, at all risks to himself, to fulfil the Divine Mission, entrusted to him. Under no circumstances could he have left undelivered God's message to His Creatures though it would have cost him his very life.

'If prophets are like poets, then what made Muhammad a prophet will never be known. Whether we regard it as a pathological case" or a grand example of mystical ecstasy, the thing is essentially inexplicable, though at the

A. R. Nicholson
on the Holy Quran

outset of his mission a dominating motive can be discerned in his conviction that the Last Judgment was near and that he must at all costs warn his countrymen of the doom impending. That he believed himself the Messenger of Allah seems to be beyond doubt. Any other view involves the paradox that a world religion claiming at the present day

over a hundred million (now two hundred and fifty million) adherents was founded by one who, not being peculiarly religious, was nevertheless capable of simulating enthusiasm so perfectly that his first essays in that style constitute for all Muslims *and even for many who are not Muslims the clearest possible evidence of his prophetic genius*. 'He was first and foremost a *revealer*, who uttered by inspiration, truths which lay beyond the ken of his listeners, but which came with a conviction of reality when they were heard. The prophet's chief qualification was *vision* rather than logical power or learning. His speaking was apparently unpremeditated—a rapturous utterance as though a power not himself were using him as a vehicle of communication.' Those who read in Arabic the chapters of the Qoran revealed at Mecca and now placed at the end of the sacred volume will have no 'difficulty' in applying the above description of the New Testament prophet to Muhammad."

EXTRACT FROM THE PREFACE TO PALMER'S ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE HOLY QURAN

Readers who are unacquainted with the Bible must be informed that Jesus (peace on him) prophesied (St John 16:13) that a prophet would come after him, whom he calls the Spirit of Truth, that "he will guide men to all Truth: for he shall not speak of himself, *whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak*, and he will show you things to come." To this prophet who was to come after Christ (peace on him!) Nicholson refers here as the "New Testament prophet." Muslims also claim the above prophecy to refer clearly to Hazrath Muhammad (peace and blessings on him!) But this will be dealt with in greater detail in the Chapter on Prophecies.

The author of the 'Ins and Outs of Mesopotamia' writes "A more disunited people it would be hard to find, (referring to the various clans of the Arabs, who were mostly at war with one another) till suddenly the miracle took place! A man arose, who by his personality and by

Opinion of the
author of the Ins
and Outs of Mesopotamia.

his claim to direct Divine guidance actually brought about the impossible—namely, the union of all these warring factions "

G W Leitner's opinion " But so far as I know anything either of Judaism or of Christianity, the system preached by Muhammad was not merely imitative or eclectic, it was also 'inspired'—if there be such a process as inspiration from the source of all goodness. Indeed, I venture to state, in all humility, that if self-sacrifice, honesty of purpose, unwavering belief in one's mission, a marvellous insight into existing wrong or error and the preception and use of the best means for their removal, are among the outward and visible signs of inspiration, *the mission of Muhammad was inspired*"

G W ILLIAMS LL D, PH D, D O L IN
MUHAMMADANISM, PAGE 4

Sir William Muir's opinion ' Few and simple as were the precepts of Muhammad up to this time, his teaching had wrought a marvellous and a mighty work. From time beyond memory Mecca and the whole peninsula had been steeped in spiritual torpor. The slight and transient influences of Judaism, Christianity or philosophical enquiry, upon the Arab mind had been but as the ruffling here and there of the surface of a quiet lake all remained still and, motionless below. The people were sunk in superstition, cruelty and vice. It was a common practice for the eldest son to take to wife his father's widows, whom he inherited with the rest of the estate. Pride and poverty had introduced among them (as they have among the Hindus) the crime of female infanticide. Their religion was a gross idolatry, and their faith the dark superstitious dread of unseen beings whose good-will they sought to propitiate and whose displeasure to avert, rather than the belief in an over-ruling Providence. The Life to come and Retribution or good and evil as motives of action were practically unknown. Thirteen years before the Hijra Mecca lay lifeless in this debased state. What a

change those thirteen years (the time of ministry of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings on him!) at Mecca & now produced! A band of several hundred persons had rejected idolatry, adopted the worship of One God and surrendered themselves implicitly to the guidance of what they believed a Revelation from Him, praying to the Almighty with frequency and fervour, looking for pardon through His Mercy and striving to follow after good works, almsgiving, purity and justice. They now lived under a constant sense of the omnipotent power of God, and of His providential care over the minutest of their concerns. In all the gifts of nature, in every relation of life, at each turn of their affairs, individual or public, they saw His hand

‘ And what have been the effects of the system which established by such instrumentality, Muhammad has left behind him? We may freely concede that it banished for ever many of the darker elements of superstition, for ages shrouding the Peninsula. Idolatry vanished before the battle-cry of Islam, the doctrine of the Unity and infinite perfections of God and of a special All-prevailing Providence, became a living principle in the hearts and lives of the followers of Muhammad, even as in his own. An absolute surrender and submission to the divine will (the idea embodied in the very name of Islam) was demanded as the first requirement of the faith. Nor are social virtues wanting. Brotherly love is inculcated towards all, within the circle of the faith, infanticide proscribed, orphans to be protected, and slaves treated with consideration, intoxicating drinks prohibited, so that Muhammadanism may boast of a degree of temperance unknown to any other creed ”

SIR WILLIAM MUIR IN ‘ LIFE OF MUHAMMAD ’

“ The aim of Muhammad was to revive among his countrymen, the Arabs, as Moses revived among his countrymen, the Jews, the pure faith of their common forefather, Abraham. In this he succeeded to a very great extent,

Opinion of the
Rev W R W
Stephens

For a confused heap of idolatrous superstitions, he substituted a pure monotheistic faith he abolished some of the most vicious practices of his countrymen, modified others, he generally raised the moral standard, improved the social condition of the people, and introduced a sober and rational ceremonial in worship. Finally he welded by these means a number of wild and independent tribes, mere floating atoms, into a compact body politic as well prepared and as eager to subdue the kingdoms of the world to their rule and to their faith, as ever the Israelites had been to conquer the land of Canaan. The Qoran also enjoins repeatedly and in very emphatic language the duty of showing kindness to the stranger and the orphan and of treating slaves, if converted to the faith, with the consideration and respect due to believers. The duty of mercy to lower animals is not forgotten, and it is to be thankfully acknowledged that Muhammadanism as well as Buddhism shares with Christianity the honour of having given birth to hospitals and asylums for the insane and sick.

“The vices most prevalent in Arabia in the time of Muhammad which are most sternly denounced and absolutely forbidden in the Qoran were drunkenness, unlimited concubinage and polygamy, the destruction of female infants, reckless gambling, extortionate usury, superstitious arts of divination and magic. The abolition of some of these evil customs and the mitigation of others, was a great advance in the morality of the Arabs and is a wonderful and honourable testimony to the zeal and influence of the reformer. The total suppression of female infanticide and of drunkenness is the most signal triumph of his work.

“First of all, it must be freely granted that to his own people, Muhammad was a great benefactor. He was born in a country where political organization and rational faith and pure morals were unknown. He introduced all three. By a single stroke of masterly genius, he simultaneously reformed the political condition, the religious creed and the

moral practice of his countrymen For an abandoned
 profligacy was substituted a carefully regulated polygamy
 and the practice of destroying female infants was effectually
 abolished

“As Islam gradually extended its conquests beyond the boundaries of Arabia, many barbarous races whom it absorbed became in like manner participators in its benefits. The Turk, the Indian, the Negro and the Moor were compelled to cast away their idols, to abandon their licentious rites and customs, to turn to the worship of One God to a decent ceremonial and an orderly way of life. The faith even of the more enlightened Persian was purified; he learned that good and evil are not co-ordinate powers, but that just and unjust are alike under the sway of one All-Wise and Holy Ruler who ordereth all things in heaven and earth

“For barbarous nations, then, Islam certainly comes a blessing, as a turning from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God”

CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAM THE BIBLE AND THE QURAN

“On the other hand, to those who are prepared to shake off superstitions, Muhammadanism offers a very rational religion. The reign of uniform law in the natural world is expressed in the unity of God—one overruling Providence. The high character attributes of the Great God are recognized by the total abolition of all the forms of worship which presume deity of human tastes and passions—not only images and paintings but music and ecclesiasticism of all kinds go by the board. There is nothing but a simple rational worship, in or out of simple edifices. Decency and sobriety of life are inculcated, drink is prohibited, the equality of man is preached in an attractive form and good conduct in this world is rewarded by an intelligible Paradise in the next. Such a religion commends itself very readily to people in want of a faith

A Christian Writer
 in The Asiatic
 Quarterly Review
 October 1888,

Muhamadanism came upon the world as a kind of reformed Christianity—a protest against the corruption of Christianity—a pure faith founded on the old models, a return to the old standards. But it had all the reasonableness in contrast to the gross superstition of the age which has already been attributed to it, and brought out, as it were by a very enterprising and enthusiastic people it is to be hardly wondered that it had a great success. When the Muhammadans annexed the civilized countries of Graeco-Roman Empire they also inherited the civilization and learning of that Empire. Hence it was that they gave to the world not only a better religion, but laws, science and literature, when our ancestors, were still quite barbarous. Thus everything facilitated their constant progress for upwards of a thousand years after the institution of the Muhammadan religion. Certainly it seems to be very effective in rendering men's lives and manners outwardly decent and respectable. It has this great advantage that having no difficult creed, exacting no beliefs *prima facie* repulsive to reason and common-sense, there is among Muhammadans very little tendency towards infidelity. Probably it is to the prohibition of the use of alcohol that the outward decency of the Muhammadans, as compared to Christians, is due. It is drink that debases and degrades so large a part of our lower Christian populations. We not only have no prohibition of drink but we in some sort sanctify it by the use of wine as representing the blood of Christ (to which we attribute such extra-ordinary virtue) is not only a very low form of superstition, but greatly increases the difficulty of dealing with the liquor question.

“And yet we may truly say that no history can boast events that strike the imagination in a more lively manner or can be more surprising in themselves than those we meet with in the lives of the first Musselmans, whether we

Opinion of the
Count of Boulain-
villiers.

consider the great chief or his ministers, *the most illustrious of men*, or whether we take an account of the manners of the several countries he conquered, or observe the courage,

virtue, and sentiments that, equally prevailed among his generals and soldiers”

THE LIFE OF MUHAMMAD

“ That the best of Arab writers has never succeeded
 E H Palmer's in producing anything equal in merit to the
 opinion Quran itself is not surprising ”

INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE QURAN

“ Never has a people been led more rapidly to civili-
 H Hershfeld s zation such as it was, than were the Arabs
 opinion through Islam ”

“ The Quran is unapproachable as regards convincing power, eloquence and even composition ”

“ And to it was also indirectly due the marvellous development of all branches of science in the Moslem world, ”

NEW RESEARCHES

“ Here therefore its (the Holy Quran's) merits as a
 Opinion of Dr literary production should perhaps not be
 Steingass measured by some pre conceived maxims of subjective and aesthetic taste, but by the effects which it produced in Muhammad's contemporaries and fellow countrymen If it spoke so powerfully and convincingly to the hearts of his hearers as to weld hitherto centrifugal and antagonistic elements into one compact and well organised body animated by ideas far beyond those which until now ruled the Arabian mind, then its eloquence was perfect simply because it created a civilized nation out of savage tribes, and shot a fresh nation, wove into the old warp of history ”

HUCHIL'S DICTIONARY OF ISLAM, ART QURAN

Ludolf Krehl the latest biographer of the Holy Prophet says

“ I here is given a complete code of creeds and morals, as well as of the law based thereupon
 Ludolf Krehl s There are also the foundations laid for an
 opinion extensive commonwealth, for instruction, for the adminis-

tration of justice, for military organization, for the finances, for a most careful legislation for the poor all built upon the belief in the One God, who holds man's destinies in His hand "

“In the whole compass of knowledge, looking down all that stately line of figures whose mere names serve as the best landmarks of human history, there is not one, whose life better deserves to be known, to become as some of Shakespeare's characters have become an integral part of thought, rather than a subject for thought, than that of the Great Arabian. That a man's opinions should circulate widely, survive himself, and help to modify human action for ages after he is forgotten, is, though a wonderful, not an infrequent phenomenon. That a man, obscure, in all but birth, brought up among an unlettered race, with no learning and no material resources, should by sheer force of genius extinguish idolatry through a hundred tribes, unite them into one vast aggressive movement, and dying leave to men who were not his children the mastery of the Oriental world, even this career, however wondrous, is not absolutely unique. (Query Can the author give but one other instance or example in human history ?) But that a man of this kind living humbly among his equals, should stamp on their minds the conviction that he whom they saw eat, and drink and sleep, and commit blunders (What blunders ? Muslims are aware of none) was the Vicegerent of the Almighty, that his system should survive himself for twelve centuries as a *living missionary force*, that it should not merely influence but utterly remould one-fourth of the human race and that fourth the un-changeable one, that is should after twelve centuries still be so vital that an Asiatic base to a degree no European can comprehend (?) should still if appealed to in the name of Muhammad start up a hero, fling away his life, with a glad laugh of exultation, or risk a throne to defend a guest, that after that long period, when its stateliest empires have passed away and its greatest achievements have been forgotten, it should still be the only

Remarks of
Meredith Town
send.

force able to hurl Western Asia on the iron civilization of Europe, this indeed is a phenomenon men of every creed and generation will at least be wise to consider "

ASIA AND EUROPE

" But is Muhammad in no sense a prophet ? Certainly he had two of the most important characteristics of the prophetic order. He saw Truth about God which his fellow-men did not see and he had an irresistible inward impulse to publish this truth. In respect of this latter qualification, Muhammad may stand in comparison with the most courageous of the heroic prophets of Israel. For the truth's sake he risked his life, he suffered daily persecution for years, and eventually banishment, the loss of property of the goodwill of his fellow citizens and of the confidence of his friends he suffered in short as much as any man can suffer short of death, which he only escaped by flight, and yet he unflinchingly proclaimed his message. No bribe, threat or inducement could silence him. " Though they array against me the sun on the right hand and the moon on the left, I cannot renounce my purpose " And it was this persistency, this belief in his call, to proclaim the unity of God, which was the making of Islam. Who can doubt the earnestness of that search after truth and the living God, that drove the affluent merchant from his comfortable home and his fond wife to make his abode for months at a time in the dismal cave on Mount Hira ?

His giving himself out as a prophet of God was, in the first instance, not only sincere but probably correct in the sense in which he himself understood it "

MUHAMMAD, BUDDHA AND CHRIST

" Head of the state as well as of the Church he was Caesar and Pope in one, but he was Pope without Pope's pretensions, Caesar without the legions of Caesar. Without a standing army, without a body guard, without a palace, without a

Opinion of the
Rev Bosworth
Smith.

fixed revenue, if ever any man had the right to say that *he ruled by a right divine* it was Muhammad for he had all the power without its instruments, and without its supports

“By a fortune absolutely unique in history Muhammad is a three-fold founder—of a nation, of an empire, and of a religion. Illiterate himself, scarcely able to read or write, he was yet the author of a book, which is a poem, a code of laws, a Book of Common Prayer and a Bible in one, and is revered to this day by a sixth, (now a fourth) of the whole human race, as a miracle of purity of style, of wisdom and of truth. It was the one miracle claimed by Muhammad — his standing miracle he called it, and *a miracle indeed it is*. Muhammad to end of his life claimed for himself that title only with which he had begun, and which the highest philosophy and the truest Christianity will one day, I venture to believe agree in yielding to him, that of a Prophet a very Prophet of God ”

MUHAMMAD AND MUHAMMADANISM

“ Over a large portion of the world Islamism as a missionary religion is more successful than Christianity (Sensation). Not only are the Moslem converts from Paganism more numerous than the Christian converts, but Christianity in some regions is *actually receding before Islam*, while attempts to proselytise Muhammadan nations are notoriously unsuccessful. We not only do not gain ground, but even fail to hold our own. The faith of Islam extends from Morocco to Java, from Zanzibar to China and is spreading across Africa with giant strides. It has acquired a footing on the Congo and the Zambesi, while Uganda, the most powerful of the Negro states has just become Muhammadan. In India, western civilization which is sapping Hinduism, only prepares the way for Islam. Of the 255 millions in India, 50 millions are already Moslems, and of the whole population of Africa more than half. It is not the first propagation of Islam that has to be explained,

The Rev Canon
Isaac Taylors remarks
on Islam

but it is the permanency with which it retains its hold upon its converts. Christianity is less tenacious in its grasp. While in India and Africa it is receding before Islam and in Jamaica the Negroes, nominally Christian, are lapsing into Oboeism, it may be affirmed that an African tribe, once converted to Islam, never reverts to paganism, and never embraces Christianity.

“Islam has done more for civilization than Christianity. I confess I am somewhat suspicious of the accounts of the missionaries’ but take the statements of English officials, or of lay travellers, such as Burton, Pope, Hennesy, Galton, Palgrave, Thompson or Reade as to the practical results of Islam. When Muhammadanism is embraced by a negro tribe, paganism, devil-worship, fetishism, cannibalism, human sacrifice, infanticide, witchcraft at once disappear. The nations begin to dress, filth is replaced by cleanliness and they acquire personal dignity and self-respect. Hospitality becomes a religious duty, drunkenness becomes rare, gambling is forbidden, immodest dances and the promiscuous intercourse of the sexes cease, female chastity is regarded as a virtue, industry replaces idleness, licence gives place to law, order and sobriety prevail, blood-feuds, cruelty to animals and to slaves are forbidden. A feeling of humanity, benevolence and brotherhood is inculcated. Polygamy and slavery are regulated and their evils are restrained. Islam above all, is the most powerful total abstinence in the world, whereas the extension of European trade means the extension of drunkenness and vice and the degradation of the people, while Islam introduces a civilization of no low order, including a knowledge of reading and writing, decent clothing, personal cleanliness, veracity and self-respect. Its restraining and civilizing effects are marvellous. How little have we to show for the vast-sums of money and all the precious lives lavished upon Africa! Christian converts are reckoned by thousands, Muslim converts by millions. These are the stern facts we have to face. They are extremely unpleasant facts. It is folly to ignore them. Islam was a replica of the faith of Abraham and Moses,

with Christian elements Judaism was exclusive Islam is cosmopolitan — not like Judaism, confined to one race, but extended to the whole world There is nothing in the teaching of Muhammad antagonistic to Christianity It is midway between Judaism, and Christianity This reformed Judaism swept so swiftly over Africa and Asia because the African and Syrian doctors had substituted metaphysical dogmas for the religion of Christ They tried to combat licentiousness by celibacy and virginity Seclusion from the world was the road to holiness and dirt was the characteristic of the monkish sanctity The people were practically polytheists, worshipping a crowd of martyrs, saints and angels Islam swept away this mass of corruption and superstition It was a revolt against empty theological, Polemics, it was a masculine protest against the exaltation of celibacy as a crown of piety It brought out the fundamental dogma of religion — the unity and greatness of God It replaced monkiness by manliness It gave hope to the slave, brotherhood to mankind and recognition to the fundamental facts of human nature The virtues which Islam inculcates are what the lower races can be brought to understand — temperance, cleanliness, chastity, justice, fortitude, courage, benevolence, hospitality, veracity and resignation They can be taught to cultivate the four cardinal virtues and to abjure the seven deadly sins (Query Are not all these virtues necessary for the higher classes as well ?) The Christian *ideal* of the brotherhood of man is the highest, but Islam preaches a *practical* brotherhood — the social equality of all Moslems This is the great bribe which Islam offers The convert is admitted at once to exclusive social caste he becomes a member of a vast confraternity of 150,000,000 (now 250,000,000) A Christian convert is not regarded as a social equal but the Moslem brotherhood is a reality We have overmuch 'dearly beloved brethren' in the reading desk but very little in daily life

“ Let us remember that in some respects Moslem morality is better than our own In resignation to God's Will, in temperance, charity, veracity and in the brotherhood

of believers, they set us a pattern we should do well to follow. Islam has abolished drunkenness, gambling and prostitution—the three curses of Christian lands.”

(Speech at the Church Congress, Wolverhampton, vide the Times and Saint James' Gazette, London, of October 8, 1887.)

The quotations speak for themselves and coming from avowed Christians, must be regarded as evidence of unwilling witnesses, and as such must carry conviction to the general reader in a more forcible manner than any number of dissertations by the Muslim writer could have done. They are not given here as in any way adding to the dignity of the Holy Prophet, for his established position as a World Teacher is far above that. No amount of praise by mortal men can add a jot to his dignity nor can any amount of vituperation by his enemies lessen it a jot.

There is an Indian saying that a Rajah owned a very large elephant which he rode on state occasions, the largest of its kind. It used to be taken from its stand to the river every midday for a bath. But as long as the huge animal was walking, all the curs in the street barked at him, the donkeys brayed, the swine squeaked and the geese cackled to see this vast mountain of flesh moving towards them, but the noble animal never once cast a glance at the hubbub-makers, nor gave any heed to their clamour. He went to his accustomed ghat in the river, swam and disported in water as long as he wished and quietly walked back to his stand. This saying is used when any great person engages in some great work and heedless of the warnings of his friends, and jibes and taunts of his enemies follows it to the very end and accomplishes it with success. The Holy Prophet all alone and in the face of his whole nation commenced his noble work of reformation in Arabia and in spite of the strongest enmity and opposition, during the short space of twenty-three years accomplished his noble

object most successfully. What mattered it to him what his enemies said of him? He did not work for the approval of mankind. His sole trust was in Allah and as long as he gained His approval he cared not what his enemies talked of him.

When a great person performs a great and glorious action the rest of his fellow men if good-natured applause and admire him but to the same of human nature be it confessed that there are some people who delight in aspersing and vilifying him. Of such men it can be only said, as was said of the scorpion by a Persian poet that it does not sting men out of spite but that his evil nature prompts him to do so.

Nothing can be more foolish than to use disrespectful language towards great religious teachers and attribute unworthy motives to them. The cause for the scorpion's sting. No harm will befall those great men who have passed away but only the mean and scurrilous nature of the vilifier will be clear to the world. Allah says that He sent His Apostles to every nation of the world, so all those great teachers whatever their country or their language were sent by Allah. They did every one of them much good to their fellow-men and therefore they deserve our praise and admiration. It is no reason to disparage them and under-rate their noble work simply because they did not belong to your nation or your country or spoke a language different from yours.

Beware therefore ye Muslim readers how you speak about the Hindu Teachers of India. India is a vast country and no doubt Allah must have sent His Apostles or Warners to this country also. Let us respect them all, for though we may not follow them in every detail of their religion we yet follow them in the main teaching in their Vedas viz, the Unity of Allah, for the chief object of sending Apostles to different nations was to preach to them this great lesson. As for other matters they are only of

Caution to Muslim readers to respect the Hindu Teachers

minor importance and are changed from time to time according to circumstances. The writer has noticed a great similarity between the Advaita Religion of the Hindus and the tenets of Muslim Sufis. The Vedas contain *slokas* in them which are quite identical with the verses of the Holy Quran about the Unity of Allah. In any circumstances we gain nothing by abusing the Hindu or other teachers, so let us tolerate them all. We must be firm in our own faith and tolerant towards those of other faiths, as was our Great Master. When certain Christians became his guests and asked him to be shown a place to pray in, he bade them pray in his own mosque and left it at their disposal.

Religion, sacred religion was given to mankind to promote harmony and good-will amongst them and not to create dissensions and hatred. Alas! how ignobly has its object been perverted. Amongst the Hindus, there is a sect who do not like to look at the faces of men of another sect. The existence of untouchables on account of their caste is too well known. Amongst the Christians there are as many as three hundred and sixty sects all warring against one another on account of difference in their beliefs. Heaven only know how many millions of innocent men and women were burnt alive at the stake or immured in dungeons to starve and die simply because their consciences did not allow them to believe in all the trash which their priests imposed upon them or dared to doubt the authenticity of incredible stories recorded in the Bible. No number of a lower caste, however holy and pious and a benefactor to humanity can ever hope to become a Brahmin. A convert to Christianity, however learned and pious is never allowed to mix in the society of European Christians; he cannot even pray in their company or in their church. Fie on these man-made distinctions! How different is the teaching of Islam! "An Arab is not superior to a non-Arab nor a non-Arab to an Arab; all are the progeny of Adam and Adam was created out of dust." Such was the noble sentiment expressed by the Great Teacher. Nor is

this mere lipprofession A Muslim mosque will present the unique spectacle of men of different nations, different colours, different languages and different worldly status joining together in prayer and prostrating themselves before their common Creator The black negroes of Zanzibar, the yellow Muslims of China, the White Europeans, the fair Persians and Egyptians, the Turks the Malays, the Indians, the slaves and the free all stand shoulder to shoulder in a row to worship Allah Islam recognizes no caste or colour A Muslim convert however low his position is simultaneously with his conversion admitted in to the brotherhood of Muslims He enjoys all the rights and privileges of a Muslim He is considered in no way inferior to other Muslims Hence Islam is the only religion which has the catholicity to become a world religion

Reasons why the opinions of Christian critics have been quoted

To revert to the quotations the reader may ask why they have been made if not as a sort of apology for Islam Far from it Islam requires no apology from any one It is a plain simple national religion, which can be understood even by a child It has no dogmas, no mysteries, no obscure incomprehensible rituals to be performed by priests The writer challenges all non-Muslims to join together and point out any one tenet of Islam which is repugnant to human reason or intellect and which cannot stand the search-light of science and human experience The quotations have been made with a twofold object The one is to show how Truth though obscured for a time by its enemies with lying tales and insidious fabrications will eventually assert itself and exact praise which is rightfully its due, even from its avowed enemies Secondly to show to the reader how the trend of modern religious opinion is gradually verging towards Islam and the Unity of Allah preached by it The wise British nation being tired with the inconceivable dogmas of Trinity, are now making serious efforts to study and understand Islam Many eminent men Christians and others have openly adopted Islam and have come into its fold As the British are a very persevering nation and will not rest satisfied

until they grasp the truth let us hope that Allah will reward their perseverance and guide them to the Fountain of Pure Truth viz., the Faith of Islam and the day is not far off when the Muslim cry of "*La Ilaha Illallah Muhammad ur Rasoulullah*" will ring out from every city and every village of Europe, as it is now being done in Asia and Africa. A well-known English writer Mr Bernard Shaw has opined that in about a century at the latest England would become a Muslim country.

One word more regarding the above quotations. Many of those who have expressed their favourable opinions of Islam have known the Holy Qoran and the sayings of the Holy Prophet mostly through translations and have read them with a critical eye. They have thus been dazzled only by the outward glimmer of truth contained in them. If they had studied them in the original and with the eye of faith, as Muslims do and derived spiritual benefit therefrom they would have been quite enamoured of them. Even their superficial studies such as they were have obliged them to write down what they have done about them in defiance of their priests. It is said that when Carlyle first wrote his Essay on the Holy Prophet, the clergy made such a clamour about it that he was obliged to delete several passages and recast others. But times have considerably changed since then and thanks to the British Rule every subject is at liberty to express his convictions about religion without hindrance or the fear of the Inquisition. But the writer has noticed with pain that several Arya Samajists and others have been rash enough to use vulgar abusive language against the Holy Prophet of Islam. Can a human being commit greater folly than this? To abuse and insult a member of humanity, however bad his character is foolish enough. No wise person will ever utter words which are likely to cause pain to others, for no good can come out of them. And in case of those who have departed from this life, it is doubly foolish to speak ill of them, for the words cannot reach them, as they are far beyond their reach and if the departed persons were persons of religious pre-eminence

and have millions of followers whose feelings would be hurt if any unworthy language be used regarding them, it is trebly foolish and is besides punishable by the State. How foolish then to waste one's breath without any compensating benefit! What do the abusers gain in such cases—only punishment by the Government imprisonment and fine, besides broken heads or even death at the hands of the aggrieved party. How many cases have occurred of late in which fools indulged in abusing the Holy Prophet and were punished by the Government or killed by some aggrieved Muslim in revenge. How promptly did retributive justice seize them! Did their abuse do any harm either to the Holy Prophet or to the Faith of Islam he preached? Not a bit. Then why risk lives and liberty by speaking or writing some foolish words? Common-sense condemns the act as mad. There are so many religions extant on the face of the earth and people who profess,

It is a matter of necessity and but rarely of choice

them are mostly if not wholly born in the faith they profess, so that faith is a matter of necessity and not of choice. Allah created them all of different faiths as He created men with different complexions. Would it be just and proper on your part to hate and abuse your neighbour simply because he wears a complexion different from yours? We must bear in mind that all men, black and white, good and bad, Muslim and non-Muslim were created by Allah and sent into this world. So also He has sent Teachers to all nations talking their respective vernaculars and preaching in their mother-tongue. The great world Teacher Hazrath Muhammad (peace and blessings on him) was raised in Arabia and was given a book in the language of that country as the Hindus were given their Vedas in Sanskrit. A greater number of God's creatures believe in him and revere him than in any other prophet. He never harmed a single soul in his life, on the contrary he forbore to take revenge on thousands of men who had done the greatest harm to him and not only forgave them but also loaded them with gifts and presents instead. What complaint can any one have to make against an inoffensive person of such magnanimous forbearance? Is

it not foolish to talk disrespectfully of such a great man? If any body should happen not to like his teachings let him not follow them but why abuse him as if he had done personal injury or harm to the abuser? Should any doubt be felt about any matter taught by him, it may be discussed in ordinary polite language as befits men of understanding and culture and explanations may be called for from the Muslim doctors and there will be found many a Muslim doctor who would gladly give the necessary explanation and satisfy the enquirer. If still unsatisfied the enquirer may follow any other teacher he likes or may go without a teacher at all leaving Islam and its great teacher alone in peace. But to abuse him is only showing one's own mean nature and base servility to the dog of passion. On the other hand compare the tolerant and noble language of the Holy Qoran "There is no compulsion in religion, the right way has been clearly distinguished from the wrong" (Chapter 2 256) "And if thy Lord had pleased surely all those who are in the Earth would have believed all of them, wilt thou then force people to become believers?" (Chapter 10 99) Muslims never speak ill of any religious teacher, on

the contrary they show the utmost deference to him, no matter in what age he flourished and what language he spoke. Has anybody ever noticed a Muslim abusing religious teachers, thus giving rise to ill-feeling or blood shed? Let people curb their passions instead of becoming slaves to them and avoid using intemperate language towards great men of the past or the present, for in the subjugation of passions lies true civilization and not merely in wearing a peculiar kind of dress or going about naked with only a loin-cloth. Islam looks to the heart and not the body or its wrappings.

CHAPTER XXV

Dear reader the writer begs to offer a few hints for your kind consideration. To whatever religion or sect you may belong, before taking up this book to read please cast off all prejudice

Hints to readers
of this book

and class hatred, for assuredly these two things will give you a distorted view of things and warp your judgment. Men with pre conceived bias will gain little advantage or instruction by reading this or any other book. You may be a Muslim, a Christian, a Jew, a Hindu, a Parsee or belong to some other *religion*. Remember that you are so from necessity and not from free choice. Because you were born of parents who professed some one of those religions, you also consider yourself as one of that class. But if you are a searcher after Truth consider yourself, for the time being, as belonging to no particular class but only as an open-minded rational human being as Allah created you, an enquirer who tests the truth of any statement, belief or rule of guidance given herein, from the stand point of Human Reason, the possession of which faculty alone gives you superiority over all other animals and which also renders you responsible before God and man for your actions. It follows as a corollary that Rationality is the grand criterion with which to judge of religion as of all other matters. Now compare the statements, beliefs and rules of guidance given in Islam with those of other religions and select the best, that is the most reasonable and most suited to human nature and reject whatever is repugnant or unsuited to human nature. One or two examples may be given to illustrate this position. If any one tells you that God the Dispenser of strict impartial justice will punish you for the sins of another or vice versa punish another for your sins you cannot believe it for it is against reason and your common sense. Again if you are advised to give up your coat and shirt also to a person who robs you of your turban you will at once reject the advice as repugnant to human nature. Can one person be found in a thousand who would willingly act up to such advice? The rationalist does not concern himself with the question as to who made an assertion and in what book it is contained. His only safe and sure touch-stone is his Reason and whatever is against it he will at once reject. The same test applies equally to all religious precepts. How truthfully the Holy Qoran

defines religion in the following words “Then set your face upright for religion in the right state *the nature made by Allah in which He has made men*, there is no altering of Allah’s creation, that is the right religion, but most people do not know” (Chapter 30 30)

It is thus clearly made known to all that the right religion is that which is in accord with the nature and constitution of mankind and as the best portion of human nature is his Reason or Intellect, true religion must satisfy it and that which does not fulfil this condition is no true religion. It is really wonderful that whilst people are guided, punished and rewarded according to Reason in all their worldly dealings, how they taboo it in the most important concern of their lives, viz, religion and blindly follow as true dogmas which are obviously incomprehensible and which no one can explain or admit as rational. To revert to the above illustrations can you ever honestly believe that if A commits a murder B would be hanged for it? Or would your reason approve of your giving up your coat and shirt to the man who robs you of your turban? Would it not be encouraging the robber’s thieving propensities? Can any society exist peaceably if this practice were followed generally? Hence a rationalist will unhesitatingly reject the advice as unsuited to human nature.

This book is not a romance nor a fairy-tale. It gives in brief the life-history of a very great personage, in fact the greatest person that ever lived as has been repeatedly pointed out in these pages and there is nothing mythical or fabulous in it every incident mentioned is a stern solid fact of history. Hence it deserves our closest study. Every saying and every action of the Great World Teacher should be carefully considered as it is full of wisdom and guidance to all readers. If you are not biassed and possess an open discerning mind you will invariably find that his words and actions were the wisest

and the most appropriate for the occasion But of this you will yourself be the best judge

Please do not skip over the pages or read the book in a perfunctory manner, if you mean to derive any benefit from the perusal You know that what is done in a hurry is never done well But read a portion and do not continue reading until you have fully digested it If this cannot be done in a single perusal, it may be repeated several times and you will be well repaid for your trouble

Should you desire further information on any question touched herein, you may refer to larger works written by Muslims or you may apply to any well read Muslim or publish your doubts and questions in some well circulated paper and some Muslim or other will reply

Dear young brothers and sisters in Islam, do you know that in a few short years you will grow up into adult men and women, members of the great fraternity of glorious Islam for whose special behoof Allah the Merciful has sent down His infallible book the Holy Ooran, which is at once a mercy, a guide and a panacea for all human ills But alas! how few of you are reading it and profiting by it The writer is aware that the thoughtful parents of some of you make their children read the Holy Book and even commit some portion of it to memory, before sending them to public schools The girls may be said to be better off in this respect than boys But neither the boys nor the girls are taught the meaning of what they read People seem to think that if they make their children read the great Book in original Arabic from beginning to end, they do enough to satisfy the demands of religion and that they need not trouble themselves further What a sad mistake! Though the mere reading of the Arabic text is better than no reading at all yet what knowledge can such parrotlike readers gain from it? The Book was sent to be read, understood

Hints to Muslim
boys and girls in
particular

and acted upon by all Muslims but if they do not know what it enjoins and what it forbids, how can they be guided by it Muslims, who are not guided by it are as it were frustrating the very object of its being sent down This will be better illustrated by a parable

A mighty monarch sent a large number of his servants into a far off island which they had never seen before, with strict orders to explore it and pick up and bring back to him whatever precious stones and other valuable curiosities they could find therein, as the island abounded with them He gave them a scroll for their guidance The monarch was so kind hearted that he wrote down in the scroll exhaustive instructions for the welfare and guidance of his servants It contained rules as to how far they should travel every day, how long they should rest, what ways they should avoid and which way they should travel and similar matters It also enumerated the several quagmires, quicksands, rivers, cataracts, hills, ravines and thorny scrub jungles they would have to encounter with instructions how best to brave every difficulty The scroll further repeatedly cautioned them against the machinations of an old rebel chief whom the monarch had, for faults committed against his majesty, banished from his kingdom together with his numerous progeny and transported them all to the island where out of envy and spite they all made it their main duty to mislead human travellers and decoy them by fair promises and false shows to their dens, where they murdered some, blinded others and made some others their slaves for ever to work under them In this the bad old man was greatly assisted by an ogress his sister, an ugly and stinking old hag a great sorceress who at her will and pleasure changed herself by enchantment into a fair, ravishingly beautiful smiling and sweet-smelling young maiden and decoyed way-farers into her den What was more dangerous was that she showed herself in a new shape and new garb to every traveller But as soon as any unfortunate traveller foolishly entered into her den,

The parable of a monarch and his servants

she instantly changed her shape into the hideous old ogress she was and throwing him down drank off his life-blood and shoved the carcase into a large furnace that was incessantly burning with roaring spitting flames in her backyard the fire of which could never be extinguished

The scroll further stated that such of the servants as would return safe and sound as they were before starting on the journey and would bring genuine valuable gems from the island would be rewarded in proportion to the value of their finds. At the same time it cautioned them that the island also abounded in good looking fruit and berries which were really poisonous and also in worthless spurious stones whose glamour was deceptive and temporary and would entirely disappear when submitted to the test by the monarch. The scroll explicitly stated that servants taking such spurious gems or taking no gems whatever to him would be severely punished. It further laid down that to every one of the servants had been allotted a fixed time within which to perform his task and on the expiry of which he would be recalled no extension of time being granted under any pretext whatsoever. The monarch was so good and kind that when his subjects set out on the journey he advised them thus, "though I have given you in my script complete directions for your behaviour on the island, yet if any overwhelming calamity overtake you with which you cannot successfully grapple or should the machinations of the bad old man or of the treacherous ogress should entangle you in perplexities and prove too much for you, you have only to call on me for aid. My secret agents who are watching you and recording all your actions, unseen by you will convey your supplications to me and I will immediately respond to your call and give you relief." The servants at last started on the journey and all safely arrived at the island. But when they landed they found it so picturesque, so attractive and abounding in fruit and flowers and other luxuries of various kinds that most of them spent all their time and devoted all

their energies towards collecting those things, they entirely forgot that they would have to return to their king and master, as also his commands to search for precious gems and to take and present them to him, whenever he should be pleased to send for them. In fact they were so absorbed in gathering and searching for the luxuries of the Island, that they mistook it for their permanent abode and never once thought of their Merciful king and his great beautiful kingdom and the precious rewards he had promised to those that carried out his orders, even though they saw many of their companions being recalled every day from their midst to his presence. Some ate the poisonous fruit and either perished or became valetudinary. Several fell victims to the wiles of the bad old man and many others to the blandishments of the sorceress and were thus destroyed. Men of these three classes laid aside the royal script and never once looked into it. A few men forming the fourth class, however, took great care of it and frequently kissed it, laid it on their heads and eyes as appreciating and respecting it and even read it now and then but it being written in the royal court language with which these plebians were unacquainted, could not understand the injunctions the prohibitions and the advice it contained. They never troubled themselves to ascertain its meaning from those that knew the language thus they derived no instruction from merely reading the script without understanding what it contained. A very few men, however, forming the fifth class, a very very small minority studied the king's scroll and understanding its contents obeyed them implicitly and succeeded in avoiding the difficulties and dangers mentioned therein and were fortunate enough to secure some real gems to present to their king. These men gained enviable prizes from him.

The interpretation of this parable is obvious. But as there may be some very young people among the readers, it is given here. The good kind king is the Merciful Allah. The island stands for this our present world. The scroll of

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Interpretation of
the Parable

the King is the Holy Qoran The bad old man is Satan and the ogress represents the prohibited joys and love of the world The great furnace is hell Real gems are genuine good acts done with a view to please Allah and spurious ones are apparent good acts but hypocritically done not to please Allah but to obtain fame amongst men or to satisfy one's pride or for show Such actions can never gain any reward from Allah Men of the first kind are those who have no faith in Allah, in life after death, in heaven and hell or in practising virtue to gain rewards from Allah and avoiding evil to escape punishment Their sole object in life is to amass as much wealth as they can Men of the second class whom Satan has misled and deceived are those who place their faith in idols and follow other false doctrines They even practise asceticism, scourge themselves and submit their bodies to various torture hoping thereby to please Allah but they are mistaken Allah has not ordered us to do anything of that kind nor is He pleased with them With Allah all these actions will avail them nothing and their labour shall be in vain Men of the third class are those whose sole aim in life is to please themselves as much as they can with carnal worldly pleasures They have no fear of Allah nor any sympathy with their poorer fellow beings They go man-dise, indulge in drink gambling debauchery and practise all sorts of vice They lead a life of pure animality and sensuality Men of the above three classes never read the Holy Qoran, which is the latest word of Allah, the only heavenly book which has remained pure and untampered with on the face of the earth They profess no religion at heart, though they may nominally call themselves Muslims, Christians and so on In the fourth class are included all those who perform the ceremonial part of a religion and think they have done enough for religion They do not try to understand the meaning of even the verses they repeat in their Namaz Their faith is only hearsay they blindly follow what they hear In these days copies of the Holy Qoran are being sold, owing to the existence of a large number of printing presses, at

such low cost that every Muslim can buy a copy And as the Holy Book has been translated by several persons into Persian, Urdu and English and so many commentaries have been published that there is no excuse for not reading and understanding the import of this necessary Vade Mecum Now, dear boys and girls, which of the above five classes you would like to be in? Do you know that the old people are looking upon you as their only hope for the uplift of our Muslim nation which from being on the topmost rung of the ladder has unfortunately fallen to the lowest The days of the old generation are numbered and they eagerly look forward to the young generation accomplishing this grand object Unless each and every one of you improve himself or herself and becomes a worthy member of the above mentioned fifth class you cannot do it, for how can the blind lead the blind a wall raised on a crooked foundation cannot be straight Do not run away with the idea that if you pass your school examinations and obtain a degree you have become perfect men and women You might have heard the following story

The student who considered his education completed when he took his degree

A certain student of a college succeeded in obtaining his final degree and while leaving went and saw all the professors to bid good-bye To his class master he said "Professor, I am glad that I have completed my education and am going out into the world" The professor replied "Indeed! I am glad to hear that you have completed your education I have not been so fortunate, as mine is going on still and will go on till I die' Education does not terminate with taking a degree The poet Pope makes mention in his writings of the 'educated vulgar" If a person goes through the entire curriculum of his university and secures a degree yet does not improve his moral and social character he is one of the class referred to by the poet At the most, he has learnt certain principles and abstract rules but this alone does not make a perfect man of him Unless he acts up to these principles and works out the

rules he has learnt in his practical daily life he cannot become civilized. Suppose a medical student learns by heart the names of all the drugs used in medicine and also acquaints himself with their several properties can he be called a doctor? Certainly not, something more is needed for it and that is the more difficult portion. He must gain experience by using those drugs on his patients and effect actual cures then only he would be entitled to be called a physician. Similarly the mere learning of a set of rules in the abstract, without putting them to test by practice cannot civilize a human being. Some such men who have taken high degrees and whose intellects have been well developed have in the end turned out crooks, thieves and deceivers of men, even more dangerous to society than illiterate thieves. Wherein does the fault lie? Who is to blame for this untoward result?

Obviously the fault lies in the imperfect education they have received. In the present mode of education much stress is laid on the intellect the religious and moral side is utterly disregarded. From the infant standard up to the M. A. Degree examination no mention is made before the students of Allah and of his supreme qualities. His Omniscience Omnipotence Omnipresence, His Justice, Wiath, Mercy Clemency and Love to His Creatures and above all His Unity. Pupils are never taught that there is a life after death, that every person will have to render to his Creator an account of all his actions and be punished for his bad, and rewarded for his good work. They are not told that in every human being there are diverse properties implanted, angelic devilish, brutish and purely animal mixed up together, a unique conglomeration of good and bad to be found in no other creature that civilization consists in curbing the evil propensities and cultivating the good, gaining mastery over passions and evil and carnal desires and regulating conduct by wisdom, reason and benevolence and not in merely wearing a hat and boots and eating food with a

Remarks on the
present state of
education

What is civiliza-
tion

fork and spoon or maintaining a decent exterior and aping European manners and customs

From childhood up to boyhood is the golden time for religious and moral training. Impressions

When is the best time for religious teaching

received during that period are the most tenacious and remain indelible on the mind

Parents should therefore not neglect this opportunity but should without fail utilise it to the full and give the young children this training before sending them to public schools. In this rudimentary teaching a knowledge of books or of the arts of reading and writing is not necessary, nor need there be a special teacher for this purpose. The parents are the best teachers, especially the mother. Even elder brothers and

Who are the best teachers of religion and morality

sisters may do much in this respect. While walking, sitting, playing lying down to sleep, in fact on all convenient occasions

children, must be taught these beliefs. Their tender and impressionable minds should gradually be imbued with religious, moral and philanthropic noble principles. Children listen to stories greedily. The tuition may take that form of giving instruction. Anecdotes of our Great

How instruction may be made attractive to children

Teacher the Holy Prophet Hazrath Muhamad (God's peace and blessings on him!) of his noble family the "Ahle bait" and of pre-eminently pious and good people

amongst his companions and followers may be told conveying moral instruction. The famous deeds of the mighty departed heroes of Islam, may be mentioned to excite the youngsters' imagination and emulation. In the place of idle unfounded and meaningless stories of giants faeries demons or of sparrows, cats and rats, which are being every day told for the benefit of our young people, true stories from early Islamic history, stories of the Holy Prophet's love for his followers, his courage and perseverance, his charity, the improvement of his fellow mortals, the amelioration of slaves, the uplift of women he effected, the unparalleled services of the Caliphs in the cause of Islam, the hardships borne and martyrdoms suffered by

the early Muslims and their attachment to and love of Allah and His Prophet and similar true anecdotes may be told with advantage. They will eventually produce a love of Islam, of the Holy Prophet and of those noble characters who set examples of virtue to the world. In after life the children may try to imitate and follow them, and become good Muslims.

Islam is not the name of certain mental beliefs to be kept dormant in a corner of the mind. It is rather a religion of action with correct faith. It enjoins upon us to "be up and doing" and discharge our duty to Allah, to our fellow-creatures, men and dumb animals, and duty to self. Obedience to and love of Allah and of His Holy Prophet, obedience to parents, respect for elders, affection towards the young, love of learning and knowledge, good feelings towards all and sympathy for the poor and the decrepit, all these should be impressed upon children of tender age by their elders. To make the teaching more effective, practical examples should be set before them by the teachers. For instance, if the virtue of charity is inculcated by discourse, the teacher should give away a piece of money or a morsel of food to some deserving destitute person or better still give it to the young pupil and make him dispense it in charity. If an apple or a cake is given him, he should be made to share it with his brothers and sisters, if he has any or if not with some young boys or girls living in the neighbourhood. From their very boyhood they should be made to say their Namaz at proper times. The benefits to be derived from this inestimable habit cannot be sufficiently appraised. It keeps the body as well as the soul healthy and prime. A habitual 'namazee' has to rise early before sunrise, wash himself and perform the Namaz at regular fixed hours five times a day, which helps him in forming regular and active habits, besides furnishing him with bodily exercise. He has besides to keep his body, clothes and his house clean and to wash his face

Islam a religion
of action with true
faith

Advantage from
the habit of saying
namaz regularly

and limbs before performing every Namaz. The advantages of personal cleanliness cannot be over-estimated. Above all he must remain sober and must not even touch any wine or other intoxicating drink. If a drop of it happens accidentally to soil his clothes, he must wash it off before saying the Namaz. Then the concentration of mind which he practises and which is the main feature of the Namaz qualifies him to pay undivided attention to a subject at a time, which is a great mental acquisition. The soul is nourished and vivified by communion with its Creator. The man understands his own incapacity and weakness and the infinite might of Allah and prostrates himself before him supplicating His pardon, mercy and guidance, and pouring out his ecstatic love and gratitude for all the benefits conferred upon him by the Lord. How comforted, sanguine and buoyant one feels after offering one's Namaz to Allah. Such men are seldom drawn into sin; the fear of Allah is always before them. In short the advantages of offering Namaz regularly cannot be fully described. I therefore you young readers, boys and girls make it a habit from your early age and never leave it. The Holy Prophet made his followers perform Namaz even on the battlefield whilst fighting was going on. Its importance can be gauged from this. Even in sickness Muslims are enjoined to perform their Namaz, sitting if unable to stand up, or even lying down on their beds, if unable to sit up. As food is necessary for the welfare of the body, so Namaz is all the more necessary for that of the soul, for people generally eat twice or thrice in twenty four hours but they are ordered to perform Namaz five times during that period.

Perhaps boys and girls attending schools may plead want of time, but in reality they have no excuse. It is a wellknown maxim and perfectly true that when there is a will, there is a way. Three out of the five prayers are said at home before sunrise and after sunset. As for the other two Zohur and Asar, they may be

No excuse for
school going people

combined if necessary and read together in the afternoon recess for tiffin. Nor need the students spend much of their time over the Namaz. It need not take more than a few minutes to say it. Namaz should be brief but heart-felt and sincere. The young people's main consideration should be to keep up the habit. If they make the prescribed 'Wadhu' (ablution) before going to school and keep it up, they need not make it again during school time. If they happen to wear boots covering their feet up to the ankles and if they had been put on after making 'Wadhu' and washing the feet, the boots need not be removed to wash the feet for the next 'Wadhu'. In such circumstances it would be enough to draw three fingers of the right hand wet with water on the upper side of the boots from the toes upwards to the ankles. This concession extends for twenty-four hours, after which the feet should be washed. It is a very advantageous habit to keep up the 'Wadhu' at all times, except while sleeping.

Namaz to be brief
but heartfelt and
sincere.

The young readers will have understood the absolute necessity for learning the injunctions and the prohibitions contained in the Holy Quran. If they have not studied the Arabic language, they can have an Arabic Quran having a translation in Urdu or English rendered by some Muslim and with the aid of commentaries can understand the meaning of the original well enough. It is not a book to be bound in gilt covers, enclosed in a rich case of embroidered silk, to be occasionally kissed and kept on the head and pressed to the breast and then kept in a high niche in a wall. It is intended to be constantly read, understood and acted upon. It is to be a Muslim's Vade Mecum to guide him on all occasions to clear all his doubts and difficulties and to point out the right way to follow. Every boy and every girl is advised to make it a habit of reading a portion of it every day after the morning prayer or if that does not suit at any other time during the day or the night and digest its

The perusal of the
Holy Quran after
morning prayer to
be made a habit of

contents It is not advisable to read several pages or chapters of it at a time but the best plan is to read a little every day and thoroughly understand it and what is more important try to act up to what it teaches

Dear young ladies and gentlemen, you might have heard and read about the conquests made and the glory gained by the early Muslims, our progenitors How strong were they in their faith, what staunch followers of the Holy Prophet they were and united in themselves They sacrificed their properties and their lives freely and ungrudgingly in the service of Allah and the cause of Islam In fact they considered martyrdom a boon and eagerly sought it This was the secret of their uniform success in warfare They seldom suffered defeat and if they ever met with it, they were patient and persevering The Holy Prophet if present or the Holy Qoran in his absence was their guide Hence they never failed to accomplish what they undertook to do Dear readers have you ever seriously considered why we have fallen so low and what are the best means of retrieving this disaster? Every would-be reformer suggests his own measures Some think that unless English education is freely adopted by Muslims they can never rise But rest assured that this notion is radically wrong Of course the ruling race is English and we as their subjects cannot but acquaint ourselves with their language, to hold intercourse with them, to represent our wants and grievances to them and in some cases to seek employment under them, to earn a livelihood But to hope that we will become good Muslims and good moral God fearing people by having an English education is like running after a mirage to quench our thirst The writer admits that by having an English education and taking out degrees, a few muslims may gain employment under the Government and a fewer still may rise in public service

but what an infinitesimally small proportion of the nation would thus better itself. Can the whole nation obtain service with the Government at any time? Our aim is the uplift of the whole nation, religiously, morally and socially. Service after all is not a very enviable occupation. Those that have no other means of livelihood may take it up as a matter of necessity. A certain friend of the writer a person well stricken in years used to remark, "no donkey serves another donkey, nor does an ape become a servant to another ape that indignity is suffered by man alone and is exclusively reserved for him." English education as it is at present given in schools and colleges is utterly inadequate for our purpose. While it sharpens the intellect, it deadens all sense of religion and morality. It, further, in most cases, engrafts certain vices and several other undesirable qualities upon the mind such as a too high sense of one's self, self sufficiency, pride and looking down upon others with contempt. It is not suited to the Muslims. It may do very well for those who barter their everlasting life to come for the present one. But for those who wish to remain good Muslims and attach greater importance to their future life which is everlasting than to the present one, which is short-lived English education as it prevails at present, is not at all suited. It is a matter for extreme regret and surprise that possessing the best revealed Book, the Holy Quran, as our guide and the best teacher in the world, the Holy Prophet as our teacher, we Muslims should look to Christians and other non-Muslims for education and civilization.

Dear Muslim readers, have you hit upon the true reason why our nation has sunk so low in every respect? The reply lies in a nut-shell. Allah, our Merciful Creator says that He never changes the condition of a nation until the nation changes it itself. As long as Muslims were real Muslims and studied and followed the Holy Quran, they were the lords and masters of the

world But when they gradually neglected its injunctions, until at last they laid it aside altogether, calamities and misfortunes overtook them The saying now exactly fits our present condition that "Islam is contained in books and Muslims are sleeping in their graves.", The writer feels ashamed to say that he has seen Muslim graduates who do not know how to make the "Wadhu" Every Muslim reader is earnestly besought to study and obey the Holy Qoran and better his or her condition Till then, the nation cannot prosper, for what is a nation but a collection of individual items of humanity ?

CHAPTER XXVI

Please do not take it amiss dear boys and girls if an old man warns you against some pre-vailing bad habits among the school going youngsters as only good-will towards you prompts him to do so Smoking cigars and cigarettes is a pernicious habit, which gradually undermines the smoker's health besides the misuse of money it involves Another and more dangerous habit is frequenting the cinemas, talkies and theatres They present all sorts of vices in attractive but deceptive forms What is shown as entertainment but love scenes, details of illicit amours clever burglaries and even well-concocted murders There is singing, accompanied with instrumental music which is strictly prohibited to us by the Holy Prophet The actresses are half nude and exhibit their personal charms in a way that every modest boy or girl would blush to look at There is kissing and embracing of lovers or supposed lovers in view of the whole audience in a most shameless manner Rest assured young friends, the so-called places of entertainment are Satan's show rooms and exhibition halls, where his choice pageantries are shown for money You pay money and most likely your moral ideas become tainted How many crimes have been committed as a result of witnessing these shows

How truly a poet has remarked that people at first shun vice, but by witnessing it frequently begin to endure it and at last end by embracing it. Young people are in the imitative stage. Their judgment is not yet mature to distinguish evil from good. They imitate, unconsciously it may be whatever strikes them as remarkable. They should never visit such pestilential plague spots they ruin the morals as the plague ruins the body.

Never read spicy novels, love-stories and romances. What have young people to do with love and love-stories? Such books very often mistake lust, which is purely a carnal desire, for pure love and mislead their readers, by setting on it a fancifully high value and painting it with such vivid colours that children are not likely to forget them. You have read in this book that genuine love is holy and is exclusively due to Allah. The time you waste over such character damaging works may with great advantage be spent over Allah's Word, Sayings of the Holy Prophet, the Early Muslim History and true anecdotes of good moral men. Whenever you meet a person older than yourselves, give him a decent salutation 'As salamo-alaikum'. The Holy Prophet has said when two Muslims meet and salute each other Allah sends down a hundred of His Mercies, ninety of which go to the one who commenced the salutation and ten to him who made the reply. Amongst Englishmen there is a custom that if two strangers happen to meet they do not talk to each other until and unless a third person introduces them to each other. They may be sitting in the same compartment of a railway carriage but the one keeps his face to the east, and the other to the west. However this national custom might have originated amongst them, it indicates haughty exclusiveness and proud self sufficiency. Now, this is an undesirable quality of mind and should be avoided. Man is a social being and must have free intercourse with other men. Our super wise Teacher in order to promote intercourse amongst the Muslims and to remind them of their great

Islamic confraternity has ordered them to salute one another when they happen to meet 'Assalamo-alaikum' is the best form of salutation for Muslims, as in saluting the name of Allah is also pronounced, 'Asi salamo' being one of the ninety nine names of Allah taught by the Holy Prophet. The writer has noted with regret several young Muslims passing by elderly Muslims without saluting them, the reason alleged for the omission being that they were not acquaintances. This is no excuse at all. The orders to us are that we should salute every Muslim we meet with and not merely our acquaintances. The Holy Prophet never allowed any one to anticipate him in making the salutation. It was his invariable rule to be the first to salute every person he met with without an exception. Even little boys and girls playing in the streets he used to salute, bestow upon them his gracious smile pat their little heads and pass on with a kind word to them all. Such habits endear one to the people. Try therefore your best to imitate him as far as you can. The practice of ignoring a person's presence until formally introduced by a third person is also gaining ground amongst us. We should bear in mind that we are not Englishmen nor are we living in England. If Englishmen follow their national customs, it is not binding upon us to imitate them. We are Muslims living in India and should follow our Muslim practices enjoined by our *Shareeat* and the custom of the country.

Always shun evil and foolish society as you would shun the devil. The harm these two kinds

The Story of
the swan and
the raven

of companions do you is very great, though you may not find it out at once. The following story which the writer read in a Persian book is given here for you.

It may help to impress upon your minds the bad effects of evil society. Once upon a time a traveller weary with long walking and carrying a wallet, a bow and a quiver of arrows, rested under the cool shade of

a large tree which stood on the bank of a river Having walked a long distance in the hot sun and being tired he took out his wallet and partook some of the provisions it contained and drank water from the river After thus refreshing himself, he felt drowsy and laid himself down to take a short nap The nap however prolonged itself into deep slumber, until the sun passed the meridian Owing to the change in the sun's position, the shade of the tree shifted from him and the sun's hot rays fell on his face The traveller became somewhat uneasy in his sleep owing to heat but still continued in a sleepy state lying on the ground A kind hearted swan, who was disporting himself in water close by, had been watching the tired traveller's weary movements ever since his arrival, and felt a great pity for him as owing to the sunshine on his face he lay tossing about on the ground with his mouth partly open The swan at once flew up and perching himself on a branch overhead stretched out his wings to the utmost so that his shadow screened the sleeper's face A mischievous raven who was perching on the same branch observed the swan's kindly action His low base nature prompted him to play a mischievous prank and he at once flew down and by way of a practical joke dropped his excrement in the sleeper's mouth and took himself off to another tree The sleeper was at once awakened and spitting out the raven's droppings looked up on the tree and seeing a swan sitting right over his head with wings outstretched mistook him as the disturber of his sleep and shot him down with an arrow The noble swan while expiring cried out, "If I had not associated with a rascally raven, though only for a short time, this dire calamity would not have happened to me" So, children beware with whom you associate Nor is the society of fools less dangerous, as the following story will show

The man and the bear show A certain wood cutter found a cub of a bear in the forest He took it home and reared it with great care Gradually the cub grew

into a full sized bear and owing to attachment and love towards the man, used to follow him wheresoever he went. He used to accompany him every day to the forest and to help him in collecting wood and carrying it. One hot midsummer day the man tired with his toil, laid himself down in a shady place to sleep for a while bidding the bear sit by his side watching over him. The bear accordingly sat down and busied himself in driving off the flies that annoyed the sleeping man by alighting on his face and walking over it. The bear drove away the flies patiently enough for a time, but one fly persistently alighting on the sleeper's nose though driven off by the bear a dozen times, so annoyed the latter, that, taking up a large stone, he threw it with all his might at the fly meaning to kill it outright with one hit. The result was that the fly escaped and the man's head broke and caused his instant death. It has therefore been said that a wise enemy is better than a foolish friend. Youngsters should therefore be very particular in choosing their friends before becoming intimate with them.

Lying is a very mean vice. A liar is never respected nor trusted by others. He may be a very rich person and his attainments may be very great but if he is a liar, no-body will really honour him. This one bad quality nullifies all his other good ones. It is natural for boys and girls to commit mistakes and faults. When questioned about them by your elders, never prevaricate or try to mislead them by ambiguous answers but, as the English saying is 'tell the truth and shame the devil'. The Persians have a saying that forging lies to screen a fault is more heinous than the original fault. Nothing destroys one's self-respect more than lying. The liar, though he may escape punishment by telling a lie, cannot escape the pangs of his conscience. Our Holy Prophet was so veracious and true to his promises that while yet a youth his nation conferred upon him the

title of 'Al-Amin' or the 'Truthful' He has thus set a most excellent example for Muslim youths try to imitate him as well as you can Remember that in the Holy Qoran, Allah has repeatedly cursed liars, whilst He has not cursed thieves and murderers

About cos-
tume

In former times and even till recently, the Muslim youths used to wear a costume such as would proclaim their nationality to the on-lookers And so did the Hindu youths This good practice is being gradually abandoned At present it has become almost impossible for an on-looker to ascertain the nationality of students in a public school Muslims, Hindus, Christians and even Panchamas wear a like dress All go without a covering to their heads All the heads are cropped alike All wear short coats, and pantaloons and all have neck-ties Even the hair of the head is parted not in the middle but on one side of the skull, all in similar fashion You may ask if Islam is confined to any particular kind of dress No, certainly not it is too wide spread and too rational a religion to impose any particular costume for its followers It has however imposed restrictions on males and females as to what portion of their bodies and to what extent may be left uncovered A mania seems to have taken hold of both boys and girls alike to ape the European mode of dressing It must be remembered that the designing of costume is governed by several considerations Its chief object is to cover the nakedness of the body and to protect it against inclement weather, that is excessive heat or excessive cold Refinement requires that its appearance should be æsthetic or beautiful to look at The peculiar climate of a country plays a great part in determining the design of costume Europe is much colder than India, hence the clothing there is warmer and tighter Hence the breeches and coats worn there are made of warmer stuff and are worn tight so as to be closely touching the skin and wrapping it In India however a different kind of

clothing is necessary. You cannot wrap your body so tightly as in Europe or you will begin to perspire. The material should be lighter and the dress more loose. Above all decency requires that the clothing should effectively cover up the prominent characteristic features of the sexes. For this purpose if men wear loose Indian trousers instead of the tight pantaloons and instead of the present short coat which scarcely covers the hips, they wear the long coat which covers the thighs down to the knee joints, it will meet the requirement. Tight pantaloons besides being irksome in several postures of the body and disabling the wearer from folding his legs fully and from sitting on the floor, do more in exposing the outlines of those parts of his body which should be concealed from view, than in hiding them. Why then should we adopt it in preference to our Indian pyjama which is more convenient to wear, which allows a more copious supply of air to the covered parts of the body than its rival? The body should get a freer supply of fresh air in hot India than in cold England.

As for the female dress, its present condition is more deplorable. The fashion in vogue at present is for English women to wear skirts so high as scarcely to cover their knees and of such short circumference that one would fancy there was dearth of cloth amongst them. The covering for the upper part of the body is more scandalous. It has no sleeves, so that if the wearer raises up her hands, the arm pits are fully exposed. In addition to this indecency, the neck is cut down so low that nearly half the breast is open and so also a portion of the back. They have no outer wrapper similar to the Indian saree. With such scanty dress they go about in public streets, bazaars and other places of public resort. Some of them make matters worse by wearing stays.

In fact their object in dressing seems to be more to exhibit their charms to on lookers than to hide them.

Well did a European writer remark in a newspaper that now a-days we see *more of woman* than in old days The Pope is said to have issued a Bull forbidding the females of his congregation from going about in public with such scanty clothing on

The writer records the fact here with great mental pain that this practice of dressing or rather half dressing is slowly but surely gaining ground amongst Muslim women and girls Alas for the nation whose females are growing so immodest They have given up gosha completely and what is worse are freely *shaking hands* with alien men They are no doubt doing all this in imitation of the European women they see going about, and whom they suppose to be paragons of civilization and propriety Alas for the perverse thought! Christian women can dress themselves as the fancy takes them There are no injunctions regarding dress in the Bible But the case of Muslim women is entirely different. The All-Merciful Allah, for the Muslims, whose religion He has been pleased to call as 'perfected' by Him, has laid down definite commands in the Holy Qoran as regards dress It prohibits females from exposing their persons and even their jewellery to males, besides their husbands, not being near relations with whom marriage is unlawful, such as father, brother, uncle &c It expressly enjoins women to wrap their bodies in an outer cloth large enough to veil their persons, including the hair of the head when going out of their homes According to the Muslim *Shareeat* males are enjoined to cover their bodies down to the knees when appearing in public and females their whole bodies, including the hair of the head, excepting the hands up to the wrists, feet up to the ankles and such portions of the face as must necessarily be left open The same orders apply to both the sexes as mentioned above, while making their

The Holy Prophet has said that modesty of a female is her best ornament. He was himself modest to such a degree that all his biographers describe him as "modest like a virgin behind her veil". In all his life he never touched any woman who was not related to him, within the prohibited degree. Even while taking the vow of allegiance he avoided grasping the hands of women, by filling a basin with water, plunging his right hand into it and withdrawing it and requiring every vow-taking woman to dip her own right hand in the said basin. The device was adopted to avoid grasping women by the hand. Readers can imagine what he would say to see Muslim women shaking European and other men by the hand. Such Muslim women as are unwittingly following the practice will at once give it up if they care to obey Allah and His prophet.

Boys and girls must bear in mind that our beloved Master the Holy Prophet has prompted his followers to acquire knowledge by observing that the acquisition of knowledge is incumbent on every Muslim male and female. Again he has said, "Pick up knowledge even if you have to go to China for it". This shows how anxious he was that his followers should be all learned people. But he has also said "Adopt the good and reject the bad", meaning that when you come across any people who have some good and some bad customs adopt the good only, carefully avoiding the bad. We know or at least must know that there is no nation on the face of the earth, which has all good customs entirely. Europeans are a well informed race at present in worldly matters. They have certain good customs and some bad. According to the advice of our Holy Prophet we may adopt their good customs and reject the bad, we should not blindly follow them in everything they do, simply

because they do it For instance there is a custom among them to hold fancy balls and dances A number of men and women assemble in a hall and dance in pairs of a man and a woman The rules of their etiquette for bid a husband and his own wife forming a couple in dancing A male should select some other's wife or sister or daughter his companion, leaving his own wife to seek some male companion of her choice The couples dance arm in arm hugging and handling each other in various postures capering about the hall, until exhausted The hall is surrounded by small convenient recesses, which are curtained from public gaze and containing refreshments wine and necessary furniture for comfort and ease The tired couples resort thither, draw the curtain partake of the refreshments, rest themselves awhile and when fully refreshed, issue out of the room and join the dance once more The famous novelist Fielding in one of his novels has made a scathing comment on this custom To the European eye there may seem nothing wrong in it, because it is their national time honoured custom, but to the Asiatics it seems to be highly immodest Can any muslim lady like to imitate this custom, and can any Muslim husband allow his wife to do so? This example shows that everything that is European is not good nor worth imitating Acting on the wholesome advice offered to us by our pre eminently wise Teacher, we should reject such things and pick up the good But we are uniformly rejecting the good and adopting the bad or the frivolous Whilst we are adopting the mode of dress however unsuited to our country, are very careful in choosing and adjusting the neck-tie, which our fore fathers never wore or eating with forks and on tables or washing our faces in basins and or bathing in confined water in tubs into which the impurities of our bodies are washed and the bather dips and cleanses himself or herself with the same dirty water, or using the English language in the family circle ignoring Urdu our mother tongue, and shameful to relate,

Public balls
and dances
held in
Europe

some of us especially those who have visited Europe if they ever talk with servants and others in Urdu are even affecting the European accent but we are entirely neglecting to profit by the good qualities of the English. The real things we should imitate them in are their punctuality, their devotion to duty, their regular habits their untiring perseverance in business and above all their pertinacious adherence to their national customs and costume.

What we may
learn from
Englishmen

An Englishman may live fifty years mixed up with Indians but you will never find him discarding his national costume and their practices. The writer was an eye witness to the following incident

There was a European gentleman, Collector of a district. He went home to England on leave and there he married a beautiful young wife. When he returned to India

A European's
sense of
duty

he brought her with him and being devotedly attached made much of her. Within a few months of her marriage she was in a family way but sad to relate she expired in giving birth to a dead child. Of course the husband's grief knew no bounds and all his friends sympathized with him. The writer went to his bungalow to condole with him. The dead body was yet lying upstairs and her coffin was being prepared. When the writer went in to speak with the Collector, he found him seated in his chair, he was weeping profusely and wiping his tears frequently but at the same time *he was opening his official dak and passing orders on the paper*, as it was his usual time for that work. We may imitate his devotion to duty. Consider with a cool mind the difference

European and Muslim habits compared between the practices of the Europeans which you are trying to adopt and our own old Muslim ones and decide which are better.

As regards dress it has been shown that our own Indian dress, both for the males and females is more decent, more convenient and more suited to this country. An hour or two before getting up, Europeans are accustomed,

to take early tea while yet in bed They eat a biscuit or two with the tea without washing the mouth and sleep again A muslim will never think of eating anything before cleaning his mouth and teeth The European washes his face in a basin of water He rinses his mouth with water and spits it out into the basin With that dirty water he washes his face over and over again Europeans do not use water in cleaning themselves after easing nature, they use soft paper instead Coming from the closet they generally take a plunge in a tub of water dipping their faces and heads into it and washing their bodies with the same water We Muslims are prohibited from doing so, as confined water in a basin or tub in which the face or the body is once washed becomes defiled and is unfit for further use Compare our Wahdu We take clean fresh water in our hands and washing the face with it, let it fall on the ground or in a vessel specially kept to collect it, again we take clean unused water in the hands and wash the face a second time and so also a third time always taking clean water for each washing Before washing the face, we wash our hands up to the wrists three times and gargle the mouth thrice and wash the interior of the nose with water as often but always taking care that not a drop of the used up water falls into the unused water and thus make it impure We also wash our hands again up to the elbows and feet upto the ankles three times, each time every limb being washed with fresh unused water In addition to this we wipe our heads, neck and the ears with wet dripping fingers before washing the feet Similarly in bathing we first wash off any dirt or filth sticking to the body by rubbing and wash using soap if necessary, then we make the prescribed Wadhu and then standing up we pour three lotas or bucketfuls of water on the right shoulder three on the left and three on the head, taking every time fresh unused clean water and allowing the water pour d over the body to run into the sewer Now dear readers which of the two methods is more cleanly ?

Dining on a table is not a sin, as it is not specifically prohibited but when our Holy Prophet was once invited by a Roman and the viands were spread on a table and a chair placed for him, he remarked that he was a servant of Allah and would show himself as such in his every action. He sat on a mat or carpet on the floor and took his meals there in a tray. Those who like to imitate their Master in every respect, never take their meals but in the way he did it, that is sitting on the floor.

The readers will understand that, as already hinted, Islam does not prescribe any particular kind of dress or any particular mode of eating. Some servants of the Government have to wear a particular uniform, there is no harm in wearing it while on duty. Again if you are eating in company with Europeans it is no sin if you follow their practice in eating on the table with a fork and spoon. But to adopt European practices in all matters at home and on all occasions simply to imitate them is bad. Were we Muslims going about naked before the advent of the English in India and had we not a variety of costume to choose from that we should eagerly imitate their dress? Those that hope to assimilate themselves with Englishmen by aping their dress and customs are very much mistaken. Do what they would, the Englishmen would not let them assimilate. On the contrary many of them secretly despise their imitators laugh at them in their sleeves. We should be as proud of being Muslims and Indians as they are of being Englishmen and Christians. A story comes here

A Muslim convert and a Missionary to the mind of the writer, which he heard long ago. It appears that a Muslim Moulvie used to visit a European Missionary at his bungalow to hold disputations with him regarding religion. On such occasions the missionary used to offer him a chair to sit on and to treat him with due respect. Perhaps the love of money or some other inducement worked on the Muslim and one day he had himself been baptized by the Missionary and admitted into

the Christian fold The next day the convert went to the bungalow and as usual was about to enter the inner apartment and occupy the customary chair but the Missionary bade him sit in the Verandah on a bench that was kept there The Moulvi surprised at this change in treatment asked him the cause for it The Missionary replied "As long as you were a Muslim and a Moulvi you were a religious priest amongst the Muslim and I was the same amongst the Christians So I respected and treated you as my equal but now you have become a native convert Christian and my subordinate We Europeans do not mix with native Christians on terms of equality" This may be an imaginary story but it truly represents the Europeans' mentality towards the Indians Why then should we ape their manners and dress and customs still further to lower ourselves in their estimation? Remember, dear Muslim readers, that our Holy Prophet was anxious that his followers should differ from the 'people of the book' that is the Jews and the Christians in every respect as far as possible, so as to be quite distinct from them in appearance, in dress, in prayers, in eating and in every other habit He has further distinctly warned Muslims that he who resembles

Orders to
Muslims not
to resemble
non Muslims

a non-Muslim would be raised on the Judgment day and judged along with the community of that non-Muslim What a serious matter for a God fearing Muslim

There are so many other non Muslim practices and usages that have crept into Muslim community that it would require volumes to point out all of them this small book cannot make mention of them all Muslims are shaving their faces clean Some are rearing tremendously long moustaches though this is expressly forbidden Black dress is being worn to indicate mourning, even black-edged paper and envelopes are being used in imitation of European though our Holy Prophet forbade black colour to be worn in mourning and used to exact vows to that effect from

Sundry other
orders dis
obeyed by
the present
Muslims

Muslim females Men are wearing pure silk dress, gold rings, and saffron coloured clothes, all forbidden to Muslim males. Very few men except the Namazees are utilizing water or a clod of earth after urinating, whilst those that wear pantaloons have to pass urine standing, though the orders are peremptory to keep the clothing free from catching the smallest dribblet of urine. Now all these irregularities and contravention of orders are due mostly to ignorance. If people studied the Holy Qoran and the Sayings of the Holy Prophet, they dare not defy orders so flagrantly. Study the Holy Book therefore and become Muslims in reality as you are in name.

Above all, separate not yourselves from the main body of Muslims. The All Knowing Allah Himself has cautioned us against it. **Warning against joining new sects** The Holy Prophet has said that he who invents a new theory or practice in Islam not taught by him and not believed in by the whole body of Muslims is an innovator and all innovators will taste of hell fire. Remember that Allah's Word is not like the word of man. The Holy Prophet as the person to whom it was revealed is the best commentator of it, as shown already. It is not open to every one of us to interpret the Holy Writ according to our own inclination. The writer some time ago was scandalised and also amused on reading an article in some magazine written by a young Muslim Barrister that though the Muhammadan Civil Law was good on the whole yet it required alteration in some respects to suit the present times. And this in the face of the assertion of the greatest Christian commentator on the said Law, that "He had studied the old Roman and Grecian laws as also the modern American, English and many other European Laws but that he found the Muhammadan Civil Law the most just and equitable on the face of the Earth". With a like temerity several so-called reformers of the Muslims have commented on the Holy Qoran and the Traditions perverting the meaning of words to suit their own ideas. Remember that during the life-time of the Holy Prophet, and for some time

after there was not a schism in Islam, all Muslims formed as it were one soul and several bodies. There were no Shiahs, no Motizalities, no Khwarjis, no Ghair-Mokhallads, no Mahdavis, no Chhakdavis, nor any Khadiyanis amongst the Muslims. As time rolled on and the Muslim Empire grew extensive, people began to revolt and grasp power but in order to do so they had to show some plausible reason or other, and what was more plausible than a difference of opinion in religious matters? In those remote times communications and means of transport did not exist as in our own times and hence the Caliphs could not effectively control those commotions. An ambitious person propounded an opinion on some point of religion differing from the majority and collected a few adherents and raised a revolt. Some declared themselves as attached to the Ummayyide dynasty, some to the Hashimite, some to the Abbaside and so on. Readers must know that those were all purely political intrigues and there was really nothing religious in them though every party avowed some distinctive doctrine to distinguish themselves. All these off-shoots from the main stem of Islam serve only to weaken its solidarity. Allah and His Prophet have therefore repeatedly cautioned us against separating ourselves from the main stock. In our own time several new sects have sprung up ostensibly with the object of improving upon Islam and bettering the condition of the Muslims. When God Almighty has said "This day have I perfected your religion for you", old men like the present writer fail to see how what has been 'perfected' by Allah can be improved further by man. We know that no two men agree in all their opinions. Such being the case, the best and the safest course for us is to accept in its plain and obvious sense what Allah has given to us and the Holy Prophet propounded, and the Muslims as a whole have believed in for ages. Why should we attempt to do away with all supernatural matters mentioned in the Holy Qoran? What harm results if Muslims believe in miracles mentioned in the

Holy Qoran and performed by our own Holy Prophet and other prophets of Allah? Why should fellow-Muslims be turned from their belief? The worst that can be said about it is that scientists will laugh at us for our simplicity. Let them laugh, the final laugh will be ours. And for the matter of that, are not some scientists laughing at other scientists for differing from them in certain opinions? It has not yet been decided finally whether the sun revolved round the earth or vice versa. Men of these two schools laugh at each other. Allah will not punish us for taking His words in their popular obvious meaning. He may punish us, if we reject the obvious meaning and put on the words a different interpretation of our own.

An atheist once questioned Hazrath Ali if all his Namaz, fasts and night vigils for scanning the Holy Qoran would not be so much labour lost, if really Allah did not exist. He replied, "True, some of my energy in that case shall have been wasted, which is no great matter but if as I believe He does exist and punishes those who disobey and disbelieve in Him, what would be your fate? The loss of a part of my energy will be nothing as compared with hell-fire." Therefore the best course is to take the words of Allah and of His Prophet at their obvious import. If you are a Muslim, be a sincere thorough orthodox Muslim. Your obedience will be amply rewarded. The labour you undergo in obeying and offering worship to Allah, while you are still young and fresh is like a fresh fragrant rose in full bloom and will be appreciated accordingly. But when you grow old and worried with worldly cares with your attention divided, and with the fear of approaching death on you, your offering will be like a withered crumpled up stale flower and will be valued at its proper worth. Make the most of your youth and vigour and spend them in the service of Allah, instead of that of Satan. If any boy or girl turn

A controversy
between
Hazrath Ali
and an
atheist

The fresh and
the faded
roses,

religious on reading this book and begin to perform Namaz, it is very probable that his or her erstwhile evil companions will laugh with ridicule and try to wean the worshipper from the right path. Keep aloof from such human devils and ignore their derision

May Allah bless you all and make you sincere Muslims, worthy member of the community and true admirers and followers of the Holy Prophet Amin! The writer in bidding you good-bye has a request to make. When an old and infirm man actuated by his love for you takes the trouble of writing this book, it beloves you in return to read it carefully and seriously and calmly ponder over all the questions touched upon herein

